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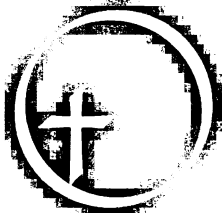
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To H. M. R. K. R. R.

By J. H. R. R.

1875



STRICTURES  
ON THE DOCTRINE OF  
**UNIVERSAL SALVATION;**

WHEREIN THE DOCTRINE IS DISPROVED ON THE  
PRINCIPLE OF THE

MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD:

OR

Proved to be incompatible with the commands, promises,  
threatenings, invitations, and most solemn assevera-  
tions of the Moral Governor of the Universe.

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BY SETH CROWELL,  
*Minister of the Gospel.*

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*MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.—DANIEL.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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I HAVE not the vanity to think that I have written more learnedly than others, who have written on this subject. But as different writers have various ways of conveying their thoughts, there is no less variety in the mode of thinking among our readers. The little knowledge I have acquired of mankind, has instructed me that far the greatest part are below a mediocrity, if not in intellect, at least in knowledge. As it often happens in our preaching, we go beyond their depth, and hence we only beat the air, our labour is futile and vain, so are the writings of most men. Instead of profiting the generality of readers, they soar so far beyond their reach, or, in the profundity of their wisdom they excite astonishment rather *than conviction.*

My aim has been to adapt a mode of reasoning and argument suited to common capacities, and agreeing with common sense, that the truth may be perceived on the first view of the subject, without subjecting the reader to a tedious train of metaphysical deduction.

Believing, as I do, that the doctrine which I oppose in these sheets is a most destructive heresy, and that it is making many proselytes in this city, I think it necessary to raise the standard of truth against this increasing error, in the hope, (however feeble the effort) that some unwary soul may be saved from the dreadful delusion.

THE AUTHOR,

S. C.



## STRICTURES, &c.

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IF MAN is a free moral agent, and responsible for his actions to the Moral Governor of the world, I cannot conceive it compatible with the divine economy, to reward with eternal glory incorrigible sinners. That all mankind are subjects of a moral government is a truth so obvious, that all attempts to controvert it, have proved futile and vain. It is equally true that many of those on whom God has imposed the restraints of moral law, do continue to the last, hostile to every moral restriction. Hence, it follows that the Universalians are reduced to one of two alternatives, either the governor of the world, does dispense with a compliance (on the part of the sinner) with his own requisitions, and the obligations to obey his own law ; or secondly, he has a method of reconciling his justice with the salvation of impenitent.

sinners, that he has not revealed in his word : but must stand opposed to that divine economy of grace which is revealed in the gospel.

If all men are saved, God must save some of those who die in impenitence and unbelief ; which would be in opposition to his revealed will, and a tacit reflection on the wisdom, and veracity of his word. This doctrine makes void the law of God, and turns the grace of God into licentiousness ; and it represents the Deity as being equally the patron of the wicked and righteous. But how shall we reconcile the doctrine of Universal Salvation with those words of our Saviour when speaking of the day of Judgment, he says, *“he (Christ) shall render to every man according to his works, whether they be good or evil.”*—We leave it to the candour of the Universalian to say, if eternal glory be a suitable reward for sin or transgression?—Our good works, though not the procuring cause of our salvation, yet are they

the evidences of our moral character ; and will be the rule and measure by which God will distribute rewards and punishments in the last day.

We shall be known to have been righteous or unrighteous, according as our works are found to have been good or evil ; and on these evidences, we shall be condemned or acquitted, according to these words, " By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." But Universalism says, the wicked shall have the same reward with the righteous ; and confounds all distinctions between grace and justice ; and covers over with an impenetrable cloud, one of the brightest attributes of Deity. This doctrine represents sin as a harmless inoffensive thing, it annihilates the justice of God ; destroys the free moral agency of creatures ; and exhibits the Judge of all the earth in the most despicable point of view, in rewarding rebellious sinners, with everlasting happiness.

The Universalian principle, is altogether hypothetical, and to maintain their thesis they must destroy the free moral agency of creatures, and with it man's responsibility, and of consequence the moral government of God. Their doctrine is bottomed on *necessity*. If no man can be lost, then there is an absolute necessity for all to be saved, and of what avail is free or moral agency. If they are destined for one particular end, and that end cannot be avoided; necessity governs all their actions, so long as all must issue in one single end. The laws which governs matter and directs all its motions to one particular end, produce no greater necessity in the final result, than those laws which govern the actions of men, so long as necessity determines them to a single end. Hence, it follows, that all the commands of God, enjoining on us repentance, faith, &c. are as useless, and unmeaning, as to command a stone to lie still, or to command the sun to shine; for whether the stone lies still, or

is put in motion, it remains a stone; it retains all the properties of matter, and necessity governs it. The same is the case with the sinner, whether he repents or not, the same effects result to him, he is saved, that is, his end is fixed, and he cannot alter, or avoid it: he will arrive to Heaven, that is his destiny, the sun will shine to-morrow; necessity governs both events.

It may be objected the sinner must repent and believe in order to be saved; God will not save us in our sins. Admitted, but as the end is determined, so are the means, and if the end is certain and necessary, the means are not less so, and why should we trouble ourselves about that which we cannot avoid, especially if the result is to be for our advantage. To command us therefore to repent, &c. when we cannot avoid it; is as absurd and ridiculous, as to command the sun to rise every morning, with the promise if he obeys, he shall have the

privilege of giving light, so long as he remains in the centre of the solar system.

What a ridiculous and senseless farce do the ministers of the gospel exhibit, according to the above principle. They come clothed with divine authority, to proclaim salvation to them only, who repent and believe. At the same time they threaten with eternal misery all those who will not accept of grace, and be saved through the merits of the Redeemer. But in the conclusion, the minister informs his auditors, that God has decreed to save all and every man, whether they repent and believe the gospel in this world or not : whether he prays or blasphemes, whether he keeps, or breaks the commandments of God, his final destiny is fixed, and his works cannot alter it ; it is not in the creature's power to avoid happiness in the world to come. In such a case, would not an inquisitive mind be ready to inquire, if such is the fact, that all men must be saved, of what utility is your preaching, so long as you cannot

alter the immutable purpose of God.— And do you not deceive us, when you make us believe, that we shall be damned if we “believe not the only begotten Son of God ;” when your doctrine says all will be saved, even atheists not excepted ? A Universalist in reply to this says, damnation means, that unbelievers are condemned by their own consciences ; the guilt that accompanies sin and unbelief, is what is meant by being damned. We answer. If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and he will condemn us also ; if the law of God condemn us for sin, and unbelief in this world, the same law must condemn us in the future state for the same causes. That many men die in impenitence and unbelief, is a lamentable fact which no one will pretend to controvert. It must therefore remain obligatory on the Universalists to prove that a change will take place in the moral character of the wicked after death. But this popish fable has been long since exploded by the


enlightened and intelligent part of Christendom. Let the advocates of this doctrine, bring one passage from the Holy Book, that is explicit on this subject.—It is a point too important to be rested on bare inference. The Universalians must be apprised that when they allow, that a sinner is condemned when he breaks the law of God, they concede the point, that Christ has not by his death made an unconditional satisfaction for our actual sins. For had he exonerated us from all the claims of justice, then it is certain, no law can afterwards condemn us when all its claims are satisfied.

But if sin and unbelief, render us obnoxious to the law of God, then we must be liable to suffer its penalty, so long as sin and unbelief remain. If God can save the infidel that dies in the disbelief of a Saviour, he must save him unconditionally ; of consequence he (man) might be a machine as well as a free moral agent, and he can no more be a subject of reward or punishment than a cart or



wheel-barrow. And is it possible for the infinitely wise and holy God to impose moral obligations on beings that are acted on by an irresistible influence of the Holy Ghost. It would be an eternal stigma on the wisdom of the moral Governor of the Universe, to destroy the freedom of responsible beings, in order to save them.

But if we allow that man is a subject of moral government, and responsible for his actions, we must disprove the Universal hypothesis, that all men will be saved, notwithstanding their characters are unholy when they die. We must also concede the position that man's salvation is conditional. This principle is so evident and supported by so many arguments, that it is impossible to oppose it with any hopes of success. Every command which God has given to man, contains both a promise and threatening. In every invitation, a blessing is promised to those who will attend to the invitation; and I think the opposers of the doc-

trine of conditions will find it extremely difficult to produce a single promise good, either spiritual or temporal, in conditions specified, or evidently implied. It is equally evident, that in every case where a condition is involved, there must exist a possibility of forfeit, otherwise the condition would be altogether useless. Can the Universalians deny, that God has promised salvation to those only who repent, and believe the gospel? But many men are finally saved, many more are saved who do not comply with these conditions; and if any are saved without complying with these conditions, what utility are they? What purpose is answered by the commands, threatenings, invitations, &c.? Did our Saviour intend to deceive his creatures, and make them believe that their salvation depended on a compliance with certain conditions, when in fact no conditions were required? 

 When he gave this commission

apostles, "Go (says he) into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Were not the apostles deceived when they received this commission from their Lord? Were they not made to believe that their salvation depended on their compliance with the above requisitions? And did they not deceive others every time they preached this gospel? What must their hearers have thought, had the apostles immediately added to that declaration, "Every man shall be saved, let his character be what it may in this life."

What a farrago! who does not see that Universalism is incompatible with the gospel of the Son of God; and it is not less opposite to an answer that Peter gave to that all-important question, "What shall we do to be saved?" Why did he not honestly tell them, You need not concern yourselves about this thing; *your salvation is inevitable; you cannot*

possibly avoid it, do as you please; believe as you will, you shall ultimately be saved. Such an answer as this would have soothed their sorrowful hearts, and removed their sense of guilt at once: and if the doctrine is in fact true, the apostles were bound by every principle of duty and honour, to have given this, or a similar answer to the inquiries of their auditors. But how different was the answer of the apostle; "Repent," says he, "every one of you," &c. "be baptized for the remission of your sins." If they could be saved without repentance and faith, then the apostle deceived them: if they could not avoid repentance, the apostle ought, as an honest man, to have told them so; he should have said, 'The means are ordained, and will necessarily insure the end; and as you cannot fail of the end, neither can you fail of the means: although we call upon sinners sometimes to repent and believe the gospel, with the promise of being saved, yet we do not mean that you cannot be saved without a

compliance, for that would be allowing the possibility of being damned; for however absurd and contradictory our preaching and principles may appear, it will never do to allow that man's salvation is suspended on his compliance with conditions, for that would be tantamount to renouncing universal salvation. This doctrine can never be reconciled either with the conditions of salvation, or with the free, moral agency of creatures: for if our salvation depends entirely on the will of God, and he has determined the time and means of our salvation, nothing can be more preposterous than to command and exhort us to do, what he has determined to do for us, or necessitate us to do, by an irresistible influence upon our minds.

Mankind have at all times, and in all ages been too wicked, under all the restraints that could be imposed on them by human and divine authority. But what may we calculate would be the state of society, was the Universalian

principle to prevail generally? Does it not tend directly to remove every restraint which religion imposes on our licentious and corrupt natures? It destroys every barrier and guard to morality, and confounds all distinctions between virtue and vice, good and evil. The same reward awaits the licentious debauchee, as the most self-denying observer of every duty in all the relations of life. According to this doctrine, God's laws are broken with impunity: atheists, deists, blasphemers, liars, drunkards, lascivious, incestuous characters are as pleasing in the sight of God, are as eligible to reward, and will ultimately receive the same reward with the believing, pious, upright, sober, chaste, praying souls: they will go to the same Heaven with these, and enjoy the same felicity as these do. Where then is the God of justice; where is the God that hates iniquity?

If men are to be operated on like machines; if all their actions are necessary, it follows, that that cause, whatever it

may be, which necessitates them to act, is the agent, and to that cause the act is to be ascribed ; for every effect is referable to its first cause. And if our actions are produced by an irresistible influence of any cause out of ourselves, the virtue or vice of those actions thus produced, is ascribable to that cause, and that only.

According to this principle, the Deity is as much the author of evil as he is of good ; for he alone must give efficiency to the cause that produces an evil effect, the same as he does give efficiency to that cause which produces a good effect.—

The Necessitarians think that they account for the origin of moral evil, without ascribing it to the Deity, by saying, “Men have naturally a strong propensity to do evil ; and hence they would do evil, without any other incitements than their corrupt hearts : and though God withholds from them the power necessary to do good, yet he is not the cause of their wickedness.

But a question will immediately arise

out of this, How came man to be possessed of his corrupt nature ? " It is born with him ; it is an effect of Adam's sin, which sin he was necessitated to commit." This will never do : God has brought me into being, as I am, a depraved creature ; and I had no more control over the circumstances which produced my depravity, than over the causes of my being : if then God withholds from me the power necessary to do good, he is the cause of my evil. If I withhold food from my child till he dies, I am the cause of its death, as much as if I should dash it to pieces. If I carry a stone to the top of my house, and then withdraw my hands from under it, it will roll down to the ground directly. A Fatalist may prove that stone a free moral agent, by the same arguments that he proves man a free moral agent. Says he, Although you carried that stone to the top of your house, yet you did not cause it to roll down, but it rolled down itself ; there *was a natural propensity* in the stone to



roll down the roof of the house ; it needed no impulse from any extraneous cause, but when it rolled down, it was from an inherent propensity in stones to gravitate towards the centre. This argument the Fatalist thinks invincible ; but a candid inquirer after truth is not satisfied with this kind of logic : he is disposed to inquire, first, Had that stone any power to convey itself to the top of the house ? Secondly, Had it any power within itself to remain in that position ? If not, the stone is neither rewardable or punishable ; all the circumstances of the case were governed by necessity. The person who carried the stone to the top of the house was the agent ; it was through his agency that the stone was conveyed to the top of the house ; he alone was responsible for its falling. Apply the simile to man's moral state, and what will be the result ? Our Creator has brought us into being, under all the circumstances attending our existence. I had no more control over the causes of my existence, than

the stone had over the cause which conveyed it to the top of the house ; neither had I any choice in the disposition that I should be endowed with, any more than the stone could chuse the weight or degree of gravity that should be attached to it : and as the weight of the stone was the immediate cause of its falling from the top of the house to the ground, in like manner, my evil disposition which I brought into the world with me, is the immediate cause of my sinning and transgressing the law of God. I now appeal to every candid reader to say, whether (on the principle I oppose) the stone is not as much a free moral agent as myself ; and ought to be as liable to be punished or rewarded as man.

If men are machines, then let us never blame them for doing what they are impelled to do by invincible necessity.— Whatever effects result from the irresistible influence of our corrupt nature, man is not to blame if he is left to the direction of his own corrupt heart : but if a

measure of light and of grace is given to every man, as a counterpoise to our moral corruptions ; and if this grace, when received, will counteract the evil propensities of our nature, the ground of the argument will be changed entirely by such an admission. But if they are afraid of the consequences which flow from these principles ; if they are jealous of the honour of their God, they can choose a middle course, as the necessitarians did of old when taught in the school of Zeno : they were not willing to allow that their gods would be so wicked as to force men to sin, and then damn them for sinning ; they therefore fancied that there was some being, or principle, that even the gods were controlled by, in all their decisions and acts ; this ideal being they called fate ; and hence to exonerate their gods from injustice, and being the authors of wickedness, they ascribed every thing that was wrong in the universe to old fate : omnipotent fate governed all events, and to his influence every event (whether

good or evil) must be ascribed. From hence it would appear that some of the heathens were more jealous of the honour of their fancied deities, than some Christians are of the honour of the good, wise, just, and omnipotent Lord of the universe ; for we do not find that any of the heathens were so impious as to ascribe their sins to the direct influence of their gods, which unfortunately some professing the Christian name have done to the God of all mercies, and have thus blasphemed his ever adored name.

When Augustin denied that man was a free, moral agent, and ascribed absolute predestination to God, by implication he charged God with all the moral evil in the universe. According to the principle laid down by Augustin, and afterwards by Calvin, we are passive machines in the hand of the universal agent, whose all-pervading influence incites, impels, and directs all the thoughts, desires, and *actions of men and angels, to one single result, viz. eternal happiness.*

Hence the final conclusion to be drawn from the above principle must be the following : for as much as we discover moral evil as well as moral good in the universe, we must conclude (as the Deity brings about all events by his efficient agency) that he is a being possessed of two principles, one that is good, and the other evil ; and hence the advocates for necessity in our day are involved in the same dilemma that the ancient Manicheans were when they attempt to account for the origin of moral evil. But if the Deity is possessed of moral beauty and excellence alone, without any mixture of moral evil in his nature, then the conclusion will be, no evil can proceed from him ; he would neither will, decree, or cause it in any of his accountable creatures. If he is the cause of all the actions of men, angels, and devils, then it is impossible that there should be any such thing as moral evil in Heaven, earth, or hell. For the pure, incorruptible source and fountain of goodness can nev-

er be the source of moral impurity. It follows, if nothing can come to pass without his direct agency, then no moral evil can exist, for the reason above given. What we call moral evil is not so in reality, but is merely a partial evil, and can be only of a temporary duration, and must, according to its transitory nature, pass away of itself ; it follows, that a Saviour to make an expiatory offering for sin is not at all necessary, neither do we need an interceding Priest in Heaven at all. This doctrine makes the Redeemer of the world a mere nullity ; his death, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven are not of the least utility ; no object is gained, no end is answered. Every person must perceive the dreadful consequences which flow from the admission of such a principle, and that it must finally end in Deism. But we shall find no such consequences to result from a conditional salvation, for all parts of the scriptures *harmonize* with this principle ; every *promise, command, and invitation* implies

this principle. ~~This doctrine is in perfect consonance with salvation by grace ; regeneration and sanctification are not less of grace, because their accomplishment is suspended on certain conditions.~~ God promises us salvation, on condition that we receive it in the way which he is pleased to effect it ; and lest we should object that we have no power to comply with his requisitions, he sends us the Holy Spirit to help our infirmities ; our part is to yield to its divine influence : it will lead our minds into all truth, and sanctify our will and affections. In a word, it will create us "anew in Christ Jesus unto good works." Here we are not required to regenerate our own hearts, but to yield them to God, to have him do this work in us. "I will be sought unto, to do this thing for you." My asking him to do this thing for me, is doing no part of the work : we come to him to do this thing for us, because we cannot do it for ourselves ; for we are his *workmanship*. "*By grace ye are saved ;*"

and not less so because we seek him and ask him to save us. Does our asking Christ to forgive us all the debt, the ten thousand talents we owe to divine justice, cancel the debt, or any part of it?

But "ask and ye shall receive" a discharge from all the debt; I will freely forgive you for Christ's sake. My claims are all satisfied by the merits of Christ, against that soul that believeth in Jesus.

Who does not see, first, that a condition is expressed: secondly, although we comply with the condition, we merit nothing: thirdly, though the cancelling of the debt is suspended on our acknowledging the debt, and asking forgiveness, yet it is an act of grace, entire grace, on the part of God, who forgives us all the debt; not a fraction is paid by begging. Could it have been more gratuitous if we had not asked? But, fourthly, should we refuse to ask forgiveness of our sin, would we not effectually forfeit all claim *to the promise*, "Ask, and ye shall receive?" or can those receive who do



ask ? This doctrine accords with the following passages of Holy Writ : “ I called, but ye refused ; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded it.” “ I would have gathered you, and *ye would not.*” “ Oh that thou hadst known, &c. the things which belonged to thy peace ; but now they are hid from thine eyes.” “ Your house is left to you desolate.” “ Why will ye die, O house of Israel ?” “ I have no pleasure in your death.” “ O that Israel had hearkened to my word ; then should their peace have been like a river.” “ All the day long I stretched forth my hand.” “ I set life and death before you ; choose life that ye may live.” “ What more could I have done to my vineyard that I have not done.” “ I looked, &c. and behold it brought forth wild grapes.”

Those people who deny the conditionality of man's salvation, little consider what a stigma they fix on the character of the righteous God ; for the opposite principle involves at least one of the fol-

lowing absurd consequences ; first, he (God) undertakes the salvation of sinners in an absolute and unconditional way, but is nevertheless thwarted in his purposes by the obstinacy of sinners, and then casts the blame on them, and finds fault because they do not yield a voluntary obedience to his commands, and finally banishes them to utter destruction.— Now “judge between me and my vineyard.” Blessed Lord, suffer a poor worm to inquire of thee ; if thou, Lord, dost afford an irresistible influence of thy Holy Spirit to effect a sinner’s conversion, why then are they not converted ? is it the sinner’s fault ; could he command thy Spirit’s influence ? But especially, if he has nothing to do towards his own salvation ; if there are no conditions for him to fulfil, how can blame attach to him for not being saved ? Some good men have told us that thou, Lord, hast made absolute promises to save all men, and that thou wilt make them willing in the day of thy power ; if these things be

so, then why dost thou terrify thy poor helpless creatures with awful threatenings of punishment, both present and future? What can they do to avert thy displeasure, or gain thy favour? If our salvation depends in any sense or measure on our own exertions, then it cannot be effected without those exertions; but if it does not depend in any sense on the conduct of ourselves, then why dost thou threaten us with punishment: why dost thou not compel us to attend to those things which thou hast enjoined on us? If thou requirest us to perform certain duties as free, moral agents, then thou dost make our salvation conditional: and we poor short-sighted beings cannot comprehend how our salvation can be conditional, when thou hast made it unconditional, and confirmed it by thy absolute promise?

Secondly, The advocates for an unconditional salvation must be apprised, that their doctrine implicates our Maker with being the author of all sin, as well

as the author of goodness: for if none can do good without they are moved to it by an irresistible influence of God's Holy Spirit, and if he withholds from us those influences, he is the indirect cause of all our evils.

But other consequences follow from this principle: if God withholds from man the ability necessary to do good, then he does evil necessarily; and if his evil is necessary and unavoidable, it cannot be moral evil; neither can the man be subject to punishment, for no law is broken when necessity forces the act; for all laws, divine and human, respect free moral agents, and not machines.— Again, if Jesus Christ, by his death, has made an unconditional satisfaction for all and every sin, then no punishment can be inflicted on us for sin; for justice can demand no more after all its claims are satisfied: hence the Universalian is involved in the following dilemma, either to allow that Christ has made a *conditional satisfaction* for actual sins, and

consequently allow that our salvation is conditional ; OR, that Christ has, by his death, made an unconditional satisfaction to the claims of justice, for all the sins of the human family ; and of consequence, to inflict any degree of punishment (even in this life) on us for our sins, would be unjust ; hence they will find a difficulty in reconciling our present partial and temporary sufferings with the justice of God. But if it be incompatible with the wisdom of God, exhibited in the economy of his grace, to save sinners in any other way but on the conditions of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, every difficulty is obviated, and we perceive a harmony in the plan of salvation. Ample provision is made in the gospel for the salvation of lost sinners, by the death, resurrection, and intercessions of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The fountain of mercy is opened, and free for all that will come and receive it. A feast of rich provisions is *made for a starving, perishing world of*

sinner, and each and every individual is invited to come and partake of the rich and abundant repast : robes are provided for each guest who will apply for one ; with these robes he will clothe us, that our nakedness shall not appear when the great Master of the feast shall come to inspect his guests. All these benefits have been procured for us by the Son of God, and they are gratuitously granted to all that will come and receive ; but those who will not obey his invitations, and come to the supper which he has provided, he swears they shall NEVER taste his supper, notwithstanding it was provided expressly for them.

I think it will remain obligatory on the Universalians to prove that God will make another feast for those Jews who refused to come to that which was provided for them by the Saviour of the world ; for the Lord hath sworn they shall never taste of the first. Will another Saviour come ; will another foundation be laid than that which has been

laid, which is Christ the Lord? This foundation they have rejected; they have forfeited the benefits of his death; they have despised the Son of God, and accounted the blood of atonement an unholy thing; and there is no other sacrifice for sin. How is it possible for such to be saved, who reject the only remedy for sin. Will the Universalians be able to prove that the remedy will be applied to such sinners who spurn from them every offer of grace? Or will they prove that all men shall accept the remedy which God has provided for sin? For I presume that no one, who calls himself a Christian, will pretend that sinners can be saved without the grace of God, forasmuch as the gospel contains the only provision of salvation for sinners, I cannot conceive how those can be saved by grace, who wilfully reject it to the last. Should the Lord save sinners, independently of their own concurrence, we should expect to see them reconciled to God *during this life*; but matter of fact stands

directly opposed to such a position : many resist every operation of the Spirit ; they harden themselves against every reproof of God's word and providence, to the very last hour of their lives.

The Universalian must therefore choose one of three alternatives : first, the Lord takes incorrigible sinners directly to Heaven, and rewards them with the same glory that he does those saints who have been the most eminently pious, laborious and useful in this world. And forasmuch as the sinner dies in his sins, he might as well go to Heaven without a Saviour as with one ; for such as are received to Heaven without having previously been washed and saved from their sins by the blood of Jesus, can never need it after they are rewarded and made happy in heaven. The second alternative of the Universalian is ; the benefits or merits of Christ's death will be extended to such characters as have resisted the offers of mercy during the present day of mercy, or to the end of their lives. But where



is the promise ; in what part of the Holy Scriptures is such a promise contained ? The subject is too important to be rested on inference, or evidence merely problematical ; the evidence ought to be plain and positive, to satisfy our inquiry on a subject which involves the eternal interests of myriads of precious souls.— The third alternative is ; such as die in their sins will be punished in the spiritual world, according to their sins ; nevertheless their punishment will be of limited duration, and they will finally be saved. This punishment must be designed as corrective, or as the demand of justice. If the Universalian says, that the sufferings of the damned will be only temporary, and probationary, and will serve to correct the sinner's vicious disposition, and ultimately produce repentance and salvation. We demand proof of such a position : do the Scriptures any where say the punishment of the wicked in the future state shall not be eternal, or that it *shall finally come to an end ?* No, no.

it is merely inferred that the punishment of the wicked will not be eternal, or of endless duration, from the circumstance that the word eternal is sometimes used in a limited sense by the inspired writers. To show the fallacy of such reasoning, I need only produce a simile: the word world is sometimes used in a limited sense, to mean only a part of mankind, therefore it can never mean all mankind. Or secondly, if the Universalian will allow that the wicked suffer in a penal way, their sufferings must be meant as a satisfaction for sin, or they must not; if the former, then they pay their own debt, and are consequently under no obligations to grace; grace has no part in their salvation, but it is considered as a debt; they claim it as their due for penal sufferings: but if their sufferings are not meant to satisfy the penalty of God's righteous law, then no end is answered by the sinner's suffering; no possible good can result to him from all his suffering.

*To admit that the sufferings of the*

wicked in a future state, will operate as a corrective to their evil nature, and will finally produce contrition and repentance, requires more proof than the Universalians have hitherto given us.


We are not only deficient of evidence on this point, but we have strong and cogent reasons to urge against such a position. First, The sufferings of this life, which all men are subject to, have produced no such effects as are said to be produced by the pains of hell, but the result of those sufferings has been directly the reverse, viz. insensibility, hardness of heart, murmuring, and an impious denial of the righteous providence of God, &c. Secondly, we have the most direct testimony to assure us, that every affliction and pain that we suffer in this life, is designed by our merciful God, to reform and make us better : afflictions are the corrections of a merciful God, and hence they are the effects of his grace.— But we have no intimations in the *Scriptures*, that a probationary state will be

afforded to those who die in impenitence and unbelief, in the world to come : neither have we any proof that the sufferings of the damned are designed to correct their vices, but the reverse of this is the language of revelation, viz. their sufferings are inflicted as a just punishment for their sins. But, thirdly, can the Almighty extend his mercy and grace to rebellious sinners, but through the mediation of Jesus Christ ; and will Jesus Christ be a mediator for the damned ? He officiates as a mediator for sinners, during their present state of probation : but for such as despise the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, for them there remains no more sacrifice for sin. Note, they cannot be saved in the way of the covenant, or by the covenant blood ; they have rejected the only way in which God saves souls. This is strongly implied in the apostle's words, which do in effect say, *God has devised a plan of salvation ; in this plan he has made provision for the*

salvation of sinners: on his part he has ratified and sealed this gracious covenant: the sacrifice has been offered on the part of God, and now he calls on the sinner to come and voluntarily surrender himself to the terms of this covenant. But the sinner despises the offer of his God; and rejects the only terms and means of salvation: hence the Lord rejects him from all the great and precious benefits of his gracious covenant: there is no other way, nor means of salvation that remains for such a sinner. It must follow, as a necessary consequence, that if the wicked are delivered from future punishment, it must be in a way entirely different from the gospel plan, or the covenant of grace: Jesus Christ is the mediator of this covenant; and we have no evidence to warrant us to believe that he will ever be the mediator of the damned. At the end of the world, Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, is to resign up his *mediatorial* office, and to assume the *character of Judge*. Who will mediate

for those wicked spirits, which will be consigned to the lake of fire and brimstone, with the beast and the false prophet. ?

But in the last place, if God will save all men in an unconditional way, what necessity is there for any to go to hell ? Does it not argue some defect in his present plan, when some must feel the pains of hell, as a necessary means of their salvation : might he not have saved them in this life ? and does it not argue a want of wisdom or goodness (or both) in the Deity, not to save them from the pains of hell, when it was in his power to have saved them ? If there are no conditions in man's salvation, there can be no possible blame attached to him for not being saved in this life ; and to punish him in hell would be both cruel and unjust : let the Universalian prove the reverse, on the principle of unconditional salvation ; for *the moment* he admits that our salvation *is conditional*, he concedes this important *fact*, that it is possible, yea, very probable,



that some men may be lost. Finally, if Christ has made an unconditional satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, it would be unjust for the sinner to suffer one moment on account of his sins, either in this world or in the world to come. Now let the Universalian extricate himself from this dilemma : let him either allow that our salvation is conditional, and then prove that all will be infallibly saved ; or admit of an unconditional salvation of all men, and reconcile it with either the partial sufferings of this life, or the temporary sufferings of the damned.

But if the sinner's continuance in sin during this life, is owing to the resistance which he offers to the Spirit of God, (which is according to the Scriptures) the same cause may exist in the world to come : and if all the mercies of God, his commands, threatenings, invitations, and promises, are not sufficient to lead a sinner to repentance, I think it may be justly *doubted* whether his suffering the *punitive pains of hell* will ever effect his re-

formation and conversion, and correct those vicious and corrupt dispositions, which have been proof against all the mercies of God, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. I think that the Universalian will find it extremely difficult to prove, by a single passage of Scripture, that the mercy and grace of God will ever be extended to sinners after death ; nay, the Scriptures speak a language directly opposed to this sentiment : “ As the tree falls, so it lies : ” “ There is no device, nor work, nor knowledge in the grave whithersoever thou goest. ” Saith Christ to the Jews, “ Ye shall die in your sins, and where I am ye cannot come. ” The promise of forgiveness of sins is made to those only who repent and turn from them ; and can the Universalian prove that God will forgive any sinner without he repents and forsakes his sins ? or let him prove that all men do forsake their sins in this life ; or that they *will have a chance, or feel a disposition to repent and forsake their sins in hell’s tor-*



ments: or let them rather admit, that the sinner in hell will become so confirmed in habits of vice, and the mind so vitiated, that the fire of hell will never eradicate the former, or rectify the latter; neither is it possible for him to be born of water and of the Spirit; nor will he be in a situation to keep God's holy command. Love, which is the fulfilment of the law, is a moral virtue, that never did, nor can grow in hell; but we are assured that no one can enter into the kingdom of Heaven unless they do his (God's) commandments. Can the Universalian inform us why the Lord forsook Saul, Solomon, &c. after he had once received them into his favour? Were they too strong for the Lord, that they departed from, or rather voluntarily forsook him, and then the Lord rejected them from his favour? But if their sins and rebellions were a sufficient cause for his rejecting them at the time he did, the same cause might certainly exist forever; and consequently the same effect be perpetuated.

eternally. For if it is just for God to cast a soul off from his favour one hour on account of his sins, it would be equally just to cast that soul off forever, if he continued so long to sin against his God.

But if it be compatible with the wisdom, goodness, and purposes of God, to restrain sinners from their evil ways, by an irresistible operation on their hearts at any future time; and if he has engaged thus to do, he may most certainly do it at the present time; and if he does not do it now, he allows evils which he might prevent; which would argue a want of either wisdom or goodness. But we conceive that it is incompatible with the goodness and purposes of God, to destroy man to save him, or tantamount to that: to destroy his free moral agency to save him, either at the present, or at any future period. And to admit the contrary, is to allow that fate and necessity govern the universe; it represents the God of *wisdom and mercy* as trifling with his *creatures*. To-day he threatens drunk-

ards, murderers, liars, and lascivious persons with sudden destruction; and he does actually destroy them from the earth; but (if Universalism be true) he takes them immediately to Heaven.

If God can receive impenitent sinners, or even necessitate them to repent, why does he let them depart from him again, or do wickedly? For if he can necessitate them to repent, he can necessitate them to obey him; and he is certainly better pleased with obedience than rebellion. But as we are capable of displeasing our Maker at any given time, we are capable of displeasing him forever: and as it is not compatible with the wisdom of God to forcibly keep us from running into sin, the same reasons will operate to prevent his not forcing us to leave off sinning.

What a farrago do the Scriptures present us, if they are read in a way to coincide with the Universalian doctrine; they speak to man as if he was a free, moral, and responsible agent. Every

command that is given to man implies this principle. All the threatenings, exhortations, invitations, and promises do the same. But Universalism represents man as much a machine as a mill, or a cart, and that he is governed by an irresistible influence ; that even his thoughts, designs, &c. are produced in him by some extraneous causes, or causes out of himself, the same as the motions of a mill or some other machine are caused by some external impulse.

Again, the Scriptures represent man's salvation as being conditional. He is commanded to repent, believe, &c. on the penalty of being damned. But Universalism says, there are no conditions in man's salvation, but the promise is absolute ; *I will*, and *you shall*, are the terms of God's covenant. The Lord says, " If ye forsake me, I will cast you off forever : " Universalism says, nay, not forever, but the Lord means only a very short *time*. Says the Scriptures, "*The willing and the obedient shall eat the good*

of the land," but if any soul rebel, that soul shall be cut off. Universalism says, all shall eat the good of the land, whether they rebel or obey. "He that believeth, &c. shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Nay, says Universalism, all and every one shall be saved, whether he believes or not; and to be damned means nothing more than a guilty conscience. ("If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts," and he will condemn us also.)

We deny that all men will ever be reconciled to God; and as this is one of the main positions of the Universalists, it remains obligatory on them to prove their proposition by plain positive Scriptures.

It is affirmed by the word of inspiration, that there is no other way for sinners to be saved, but through the merits of the adorable Jesus; and I think that there is not a single promise of salvation for any soul after it departs this life; or that there is a single intimation in the *Scriptures*, that the grace of the gospel

will be extended to the damned. If we prove, therefore, that some die in their sins, without having ever received the grace of God, it will remain with the Universalian to prove that God will convert and sanctify them after death.

What is the difference between the hell-redemption system, and the fabulous purgatory of the Papists?

But all the Universalians do not allow of a future punishment in any degree: they believe that every man goes directly to Heaven after he dies. Yet how will they reconcile that principle with the death of an impenitent sinner? We have many instances recorded in the Scriptures of persons dying without manifesting the least symptom of repentance, or faith in Jesus Christ; had such souls any fitness for Heaven? Where is the proof that such characters are saved? Is it in such passages as these following, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in *your sins*; and where I am ye cannot *come*." "Behold, I am against the

proud, saith Jehovah ; and I will forsake them." Why should he forsake the proud on earth, if he takes them to heaven when they die ? If their wills are in the way now, and thwart the operations of his Spirit, the same cause may keep them out of Heaven. For that cause which *now* stands in the way of God's gracious purposes of reconciling the sinner to himself, may operate to the exclusion of the soul from God *eternally*. For God will never love the sinner at any future time more than he does now, or desire his reconciliation more than he does this moment ; and it may be justly doubted, whether God will do more to effect the sinner's conversion at some future time, than he does now. And is it probable that God's compassion will be greater toward that sinner that has resisted his Spirit, and lived in the practice of every vice for fifty or an hundred years, and continues to the last hour of his life in open rebellion against God, than it was *before he committed those sins* ? yet he

takes such characters to Heaven ! In what a light does this doctrine represent the ever blessed God ; one moment threatening his creatures with instant destruction, and to cast them out of his presence, as objects disgusting in his holy sight, the next moment he takes them into Heaven ! They were too wicked to live on earth ; justice demanded their death as a forfeit for their crimes, and then they die and go direct to Heaven, as a punishment for their sins ! People might find a speedy antidote for all their troubles ; whenever they have destroyed their health and property by debauchery, and become despicable pests in society, they may only have recourse to a razor or halter, and by means of either they will find a quick and short passage to Heaven, without ever offering a single petition to God, or without performing a single good or worthy act in all their lives ! Let any Universalian disprove these consequences if he *can*. Let him prove that a murderer *does not* go to Heaven as a murderer, if



he dies without a change of heart, on his own principle.

If God has determined to save all men, he has doubtless determined the time when, the place where, and the means by which they shall be saved ; where then is the use of commanding, warning, threatening, and inviting sinners to repent and believe ? Not the least purpose is answered by all our anxiety and trouble about our own, or the salvation of others. We will suppose an angel commissioned to preach Universalism to the children of men ; he shall open his commission by proclaiming the fundamental part of their system, viz. God has decreed to save, absolutely and unconditionally, every child of Adam ; yet, to accomplish his wise and merciful purpose, he has given his Son to die ; and he has by his death made an unconditional satisfaction to the claims of divine justice, for all the sins of the whole world ; “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned,” (i. e.) he

shall feel a guilty conscience. Yet the law does not condemn him, though it is written, "he that believeth not on the Son is condemned already:" for if the law condemned him, it would argue that all its claims were not satisfied. Nevertheless you are not to imagine that there are any conditions in the Gospel, for that would argue an uncertainty in our final salvation; but the language of the New Covenant is, I will and you shall. This I shall maintain, however contradictory it may appear to such passages of Scripture as the following: "Repent, or ye shall all likewise perish—Life and death are set before you; blessing and cursing, good and evil—Choose life that ye may live—Why will ye die, O house of Israel!" Unless "ye come unto me, ye shall not see life." Universalism says, In the day of God's power the people shall be willing: Scripture says, "I called, but ye refused; all the day long I *stretched forth* my hand to save you; ye *would not*, ye would none of me—O Je-

rusalem, hadst thou known the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes :” I sought you, I wept over you, I called you, I would have gathered you, but ye would not. Your house is left desolate ; ye shall see me no more till ye shall say, “ blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” The Universalists will find some difficulty in proving that the Jews ever had another offer of mercy, or that they were finally saved. We conclude, was the doctrine of the Universalians to be preached as it really is, (a collection of crude, discordant dogmas,) the deception would vanish, and the charming illusion which captivates the senses of many unwary souls, and like Medusa’s charms, lulls the mind to rest, and raises a thousand fanciful images in the imagination, all these would be instantly dispelled by the light of truth. Only uncover and expose the deformed, distorted, and monstrous features of this unrighteous doctrine, and its votaries

would turn from the dreadful picture with horror and disgust.

Every candid person must perceive that the Universalian principles form a complete contrast with the Holy Scriptures ; and to maintain their fundamental principle, they make the Scriptures a complete chaos. Is it possible to reconcile their doctrine with a single command in the decalogue ? Are they any more consonant with the promises and threatenings, than with the commands of God ? The same effects result to us if we break the commands, as if we keep them. And they are not more consonant with a righteous Providence. How is this doctrine to be reconciled with God's judgment in the destruction of the Antedeluvians ; why were they destroyed ? Did they not do as God had decreed they should do ? If he could save them unconditionally from sin, after he had drowned them, could he not save them equally as well *before he had drowned them ?* and then *there would have been no necessity of his*

destroying them ; or were they so wicked that God could not suffer them on earth, so he killed them and took them to Heaven ? or did he not know what to do with them ? Since he could not damn them, it repented him that he had made them. It is more than probable that he did not want them in Heaven, seeing they were too bad to live on earth. Or did he not repent because he was under a moral necessity to damn them ? for he had suffered long their disobedience, even during the hundred years that the ark was preparing. Every means was used to bring them back to repentance ; but in spite of all the mercies of God they would pursue the way to death.

Again, it is written, “ Because the cry of Sodom is great, and because their sin is very grievous, &c. I will destroy them.” Could the men of Sodom help their wickedness : was it not decreed that they should be wicked ; and was it not as easy for God to save them from their sin at *that time* and fit them to live, as it was

for him to save them, at any future time, and take them to Heaven? and if he was determined to save them ultimately, why must he destroy them now? But if their sins were a sufficient cause for his destroying them from off the earth, was not the same cause sufficient to exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven for ever? Either their sins were voluntary, and sufficiently provocative to merit punishment, or they were involuntary, and consequently not deserving of God's displeasure, or the destruction of their bodies or souls. Let the Universalian admit either the one or the other of these suppositions, and he involves himself in inextricable difficulties.

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that people, such as the Antediluvians, the Sodomites, Dathan, Koran, &c. die under the displeasure of God, and yet they are taken immediately to Heaven! they are unfit for the society of mortals, yet nevertheless, altogether fitted for the society of angels, and the spirits of

just men made perfect ! Should the Universalian affirm that God prepares them for Heaven at the moment of their death, we demand proof ; where is it written that God prepared or fitted the Antediluvians, Sodomites, Canaanites, Dathan, Koran, and others for Heaven ? Where is the Scriptures that even imply such a principle ? There is no alternative ; the Universalian must either admit that the sinner goes to Heaven as a sinner, or he does not go to Heaven at all ; for we have no proof that any change takes place in the character of the sinner after death : but the reverse of this is evidently the doctrine of the Bible : and would it not be a singular kind of punishment, to take a sinner out of this troublesome world, and take him immediately to Heaven !

What greater encouragement could be given to vice, and every species of crime, than this doctrine gives ? Who would be at any pains, or trouble ; or submit to *any privations*, persecutions, &c. to main-

tain a virtuous and godly life, when it is more for his interest, and the surest way to happiness, to follow the natural bent of his carnal heart, and indulge in all the gratification of sense? What egregious fools were all the primitive Christians to expose themselves to persecution, to the spoiling of their goods, to banishment, imprisonment, to torturings, to be burned at the stake, and all for nothing? Poor souls, they thought that there was no other way to heaven, but to maintain their profession firm unto the end; when, had they been acquainted with the subtleties and modern refinements which have been made in divinity, they might have saved their goods, and avoided sufferings of every kind, by the single expedient of denying the Lord that bought them, and following the multitude to do evil! Yea, they might not only have found as sure a way to happiness, but a much shorter way to Heaven, had they *only* provoked the Lord to destroy them *from the earth*: for the Lord testifies that



**“ the wicked shall not live out half their days.”**

**What a glorious privilege is held out for sinners of all descriptions ; indulgences for sale, and at a less price than the Pope of Rome ever vended them ! Even Tetzel’s commission did not equal this : he could absolve from murder, adultery, &c. but he laid an impost on the wicked, and without they paid the tax, they had no assurance of salvation ; but here sinners of all classes, have the fullest assurance of salvation, without either repentance or absolution ; without money or price, (or even grace), and withal they have the privilege of dying at their option ; whenever they are weary of this life, and want to go to Heaven, they can recur to a halter, or some other more acceptable instrument ; they can slip out of the world, and go to Heaven before any body knows that they ever thought of such a place ! If these are not the natural consequences of the Uni-**

versalian system, let them disprove them if they can.

If this picture of their doctrine is disgusting to every pious mind, what must the consequences be to a dissipated world, which is too prone to evil by natural inclination, without any additional incitements? Dreadful, indeed, would be the state of our world was this doctrine to prevail universally. Every good man deprecates the evils which must result from the belief of such a principle. I would now return to the hell-redemption scheme.

I would here premise, that there is not a single passage in the Bible that says the punishment of the wicked shall not be eternal; neither is there any which says positively their punishment shall come to an end: on the contrary, there are many Scriptures which say that the punishment of the damned shall be eternal, (i. e. ever enduring.) Now which *is the safest* doctrine for us to believe and *trust in* for salvation; that which has

many plain positive Scriptures to support it, or that which has no support, but is merely inferred from some few insulated passages? A doctrine which has been maintained by the universal church from the apostles' days down to the present time; or a doctrine which was first preached by an obscure and solitary individual, some centuries after the Christian era began? Will we believe a doctrine which is in perfect harmony with the tenor of Holy Writ, and not less so with sound reason and the consciences of mankind; or a doctrine which contradicts the main body of Scripture, and the plainest dictates of right reason?

I would direct the attention of the inquirer to 2 Chron. xix. 2. "And Jehu said, &c. to king Jehoshaphat, shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the face of the Lord."—Note here, the king of Judah went and assisted the king of Israel, who was a *wicked idolater*. Secondly, he sinned

against the Lord in loving a man which God hated. If God loves all mankind, without any discrimination, why does he condemn Jehoshaphat for loving a wicked man? If the sins of the king of Israel were not sufficient to exclude him from the kingdom of Heaven, why should his sins exclude him from the favour of Jehoshaphat? But if his sins were displeasing to God, I think the Universalian will find it something difficult to prove that God ever saved his soul, especially when it is considered that the king of Israel died in his sins; and it was after his death that God manifests his displeasure at Jehoshaphat for loving the king of Israel, notwithstanding the King of Israel was then in Heaven! a companion of glorified saints and holy angels, if Universalism is true! yet poor Jehoshaphat must be sorely chastised for only affording him a temporary relief! But if God hates a man who dies in his sins, the same cause *must necessarily* exclude him from the

kingdom of glory forever. A thousand similar inquiries may be made.

Why did the Lord destroy the Canaanites? Was it to take them the sooner to Heaven? Was not their destruction a blessing rather than a curse? The same may be said of Pharaoh and his army that perished in the Red Sea: for all his tyranny exercised over the chosen people of God he was suddenly removed from all the troubles of this life, and immediately taken to Heaven! This was his reward for his impious defiance of the Omnipotent Jehovah, and his opposition to the positive commands of Heaven! his hardness of heart, and his blasphemous imputation of the mighty acts of God to a diabolical agency; his impious interrogation, "Who is the Lord [Jehovah] that I should fear him?" Oh Pharaoh! you was right; (if Universalism be true) you only went the sooner to Heaven for your wicked and blasphemous acts! for when the Lord could *suffer your wickedness no longer*, his jus-

ice demanded your death ; but then to die was infinite gain to you ; you only exchanged a corruptible crown for one that was incorruptible ! If such was the fate of Pharaoh, what must be the destiny of the righteous ? We may conclude that our God is unholy, and delights in wickedness ; consequently he has no delight in the righteous : they must expect no favour from such a being, a being devoid of justice and equity. And it appears to me as just in God to damn the righteous, as to save the incorrigibly wicked.

Another passage that is in point is the charge that David gave to Solomon : " If thou seek the Lord he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off [GNOD] forever. (Time passing onward, futurity, eternity to come.) The final end, or longest duration of the thing to which the word is applied, is signified by the term [GNOD] : if our souls are of eternal duration, then so long must the *punishment* of the wicked endure. The *same* word is used by the Psalmist,

. lxxxix. §§. to express the duration of God's throne ; " His throne is established forever, as the moon, and as the faithful witness," (viz. the rainbow.)—the duration of the Redeemer's kingdom is compared with the duration of the moon and rainbow, because these are the most permanent, and of the longest duration of any thing in nature ; they are therefore the most forcible and striking figures that can be drawn from nature, to illustrate things of a never-ending duration. The idea meant to be conveyed by these figures is, as the rainbow is a sign of God's covenant with Noah, it shall never fail till the end of time ; as the covenant can never fail, so neither shall the bow which is a sign of his covenant, fail, until the terms of the covenant cease. So sure as the moon and the rainbow shall remain till the end of time, so shall Messiah's kingdom endure forever, or during the passing onward of the ages of eternity. And we have the same assurance that Messiah's kingdom shall

endure as we have that the world shall never be drowned. The nature of the subject to which this word is applied must determine its period of duration: when applied to things which are of but limited duration in their nature, forever must mean the whole duration of that thing, be the time longer or shorter. The Kingdom of Messiah must be of never-ending duration; his kingdom, like himself, has no end; it is eternal in its nature. If then God forsakes the wicked forever, (that is, as long as they endure) then they must be damned eternally, for it is certain they cannot be saved; for so long as they endure, God forsakes them. If the Universalian would refute this argument, he must prove that the word [GNOD] forever, when applied to man, or any thing else in a future state, is used in a restricted or limited sense. We grant, that in the law of Moses it was enjoined on a servant, (*after passing through certain ceremonies*) *to serve his master [GNOD] forever; i. e.*



so long as he should live or be capable of serving, he shall serve that particular master, and no other. But as the relation between the master and his servant could not exist but for a limited time, the word must of consequence be used in a limited sense ; but in our relation to God as his creatures, and his relation to us as our Creator, Master and Lord is of eternal duration : then, so long as we remain the creatures of God, and he stands related to us as our Lord and Sovereign, so long will the punishment of the wicked continue, or so long will God forsake the wicked.

And it can be no objection to this principle because the word is sometimes applied to things of limited duration, such as the everlasting hills, and the everlasting priesthood of Aaron. But even here, if the Universalians are disposed to be captious about the word, they may find it not a small difficulty to prove that the matter of which the mountains are composed, *will be annihilated*; for it is stoutly

maintained by philosophers and philologists, that all the matter in the universe will remain eternally in some form or other ; and that it is incompatible with the wisdom of God to annihilate any thing he has made ; consequently, the matter of which the mountains are composed is of eternal duration. However diversified matter may be in its form, it is nevertheless matter. As to the priesthood of Aaron, it was not designed to exist forever under that particular form prescribed in the law of Moses ; but under another form the priesthood is continued or perpetuated in Jesus Christ, who is the end of that law, and consecrated a priest forever ; and forasmuch as he never dies, there is no need of a succession of priests : and as all the sacrifices under the law pointed to Christ as the true substance, when he came he did not destroy the priesthood, but rather the shadowy part fled away, when the true substance came. He (Christ) has concentrated all in himself, he alone is High Priest ; he

has offered the last and only efficacious sacrifice for sin, and he has entered once for all into the Holy of Holies, with his own blood to make intercession for sinners ; “ He abideth a Priest forever.”

But if we allow that the words forever and everlasting are sometimes used in a limited sense, or are applied to things which evidently have an end, are we to infer from thence, that the words are always used in this sense ? No one will be willing to allow that : for then we should destroy the eternity of God himself, and the existence of all the saints as well as the wicked ; the same words being used in the Scriptures to express eternal duration, or the never-ending existence of the Deity, the happiness of saints, or misery of the damned. What rule then can we adopt that is more safe than to say, when things of a limited duration are spoken of, [GNOD] forever means the utmost extent of their duration ; but when things are spoken of that are everlasting in their nature, the word [GNOD] forever means

never-ending ; and when things precisely the same in their natures, but differing only in their qualities, are spoken of, the same duration of existence must be ascribed to both : for example, Isa. xl. 28. "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the [GNOD] Everlasting God, the Lord," &c. "Even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." The original word in these places is [GNOLEM.] The ideal meaning of this term is, hidden, secret, covered over ; the hidden ages of eternity, which are covered over from mortal view, inscrutable to a finite mind. No definite period is expressed by the term ; but it applies to duration, future, covered over from the view of finite minds.

The Deity must exist throughout all future ages ; the infinite mind alone can conceive eternal duration. But all created intelligencies must exist coeval with the Deity himself : two periods are assigned to man, and two modes of being, *his corporeal and spiritual states.* In the

former he is a probationer, in the latter he is rewarded or punished. His spiritual state will be permanent, and liable to no change: he is fixed in his inheritance, or his transgressions are awarded by the dungeons of hell.

When things eternal in their nature, or things capable of existing under one particular form or mode forever, are spoken of, and the word forever is applied to them, we are to understand the whole duration of their existence, or rather unlimited space; or if you please, so long as the subject can exist under one particular mode of being.

Is it not reasonable to conclude that the punishment of the wicked will last so long as their characters remain morally sinful? And will the Universalian attempt to prove, from scripture testimony, that any change will take place in the moral characters of either the righteous or wicked. I think we have as much evidence that the righteous will be liable to *change in their character*, as that the

wicked will change ; or rather, we have no evidence that either will be the case. Will any means of reformation be afforded the damned ; and can there possibly be a change in the moral dispositions of the wicked without means ? Will the Holy Ghost be afforded them to operate on their hearts ? Will they have a mediator with the Father ; or can they be saved without a mediator ? All these inquiries the Universalian is bound to answer, or to prove that the damned will be saved exclusively of all these means.

We may observe, that the Scripture in many places marks a strong antithesis between the righteous and the wicked ; and they parallel the punishment of the latter with the former. In this world we are all probationers ; we have life and death set before us, good and evil, blessing and cursing : we have the same promises made to us, the same gospel ; the same Holy Spirit is given to all, the same mediator ; all have salvation conditionally offered to them, but some

refuse the offers of life, others accept of life. God judges all according to their works : he damns the incorrigibly wicked ; he damns them because they would not have life and be saved. Their wickedness was voluntary, or God would be unjust to damn them a single hour. If it was compatible with the purposes of God to constrain sinners by an irresistible influence over their minds, why did he not do it and prevent their misery ; but if God could not destroy their free moral agency to save them in this life, what proof have we that he will do it in a future state ? How does this principle comport with the following Scriptures : “ He that is righteous, shall be righteous still ; he that is unholy, shall be unholy still—There is no device, &c. nor work in the grave whithersoever thou goest—If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins ; and where I am ye cannot come.” From all these does it not appear as probable that the happiness of the righteous will come to an end, as that

the misery of the wicked will cease. The only evidence that can be given in support of the limited punishment of the wicked is inferential ; and by the same kind of evidence we may prove that the existence of the Deity will come to an end, together with all intellectual beings both in hell and Heaven. God testifies he will punish the wicked with everlasting destruction : shall we infer, because the word everlasting is sometimes used in a limited sense, therefore it is used so in reference to the punishment of the wicked ? by the same rule of construction, we may prove that the happiness of the righteous will be limited in its duration, and after a while they may go to hell ; for I see no reason to conclude that it is any more impossible for the righteous to change their character and become wicked, than for the wicked to be changed from what they are, and become morally good ; (I speak in reference to the future state) for one can have no more permanency than the



other. "The righteous shall shine in the kingdom of God for ever and ever," [GNOLEM VAU GNOD.] "Thou shalt put out their (the wicked's) name for ever and ever:" [GNOLEM VAU GNOD] the words are the same in both places. The proper meaning of these terms is, "The secret ages of eternity, which are or will be passing onward in endless succession. Eternity is a fathomless abyss, covered over from the view of mortals; no thought can reach it, it surpasses the grasp of human intellect; and as no thought can reach it, so no human language can express it; none but the infinite mind can conceive the idea eternity." But the junction of these two words, [GNOMEN VAU GNOD, for ever and ever] as our translators have them; the meaning of the first is, secret, covered over, covert, &c.; the second is, passing onward, progressing, going forward, &c. They come as near expressing the thing meant as human language is capable of.—The happiness of the saints in Heav-

on, and the misery of the wicked in hell will continue during the progression, or passing onward of the secret ages of eternity. And forasmuch as eternity never ends; for when millions of millions of ages pass away, millions of millions of ages are covered over in futurity, or hidden in the great and fathomless abyss of eternity to come! Oh God, "how unsearchable are thy judgments, and thy ways past finding out."

Our translators did conceive that the words forever, everlasting, and eternal were synonymous terms, and hence they used them promiscuously to express endless duration, or an infinite period. There are no other words in our language to express the infinite existence of God, of angels, saints, and the endless misery of the wicked. The term [GNOLEM] eternal or everlasting, is used by the Old Testament writers to express the endless existence of the Deity. The same word is used to express the duration of the sinner's punishment. [GNOLEM] an-

answers to the Greek word [AIONI] in Matt. xxv. 48. "These shall go away into [AIONIAN] punishment, but the righteous into life [AIONIAN]; the same word is used in both places. Now do not the Universalians quibble on the word everlasting, when they pretend that the word everlasting is different from the word eternal, when it is evident that our translators use them both in the same sense precisely? And they must know that the argument which they draw from the indefinite application of the word everlasting, proves too much, and consequently is good for nothing. They are bound by every principle of logic (not to say religion) to prove by direct and positive evidence, that the word eternal, when applied to the punishment of the wicked, means only a limited time; for this is their main position: and though we might be unable to disprove the doctrine of a limited punishment, (for it is not always possible to prove a negative) yet they could have no right to claim the

palm till they prove their own position. Allowing that the word everlasting means a limited time in some places in the Scripture, they must allow that the same term means illimitable duration in other places in Scripture. If they say, that it expresses a limited time when applied to the wicked, we demand proof; where is their warrant for such an affirmation? Let us reverse the mode of argument used by the Universalians, and see what would be the effect. The word [GNOLEM] eternal is used to express his (Jehovah's) infinite existence: but the same word is applied to a servant, "he shall serve his master forever," [GNOLEM] eternally, or forever: then, according to the argument of the Universalians, the servant can never die, nor his master neither; for the word forever means endless duration when it applies to the Deity, and consequently it must mean the same when applied to the servant. The mode of reasoning is the same in both places, the order of the position is

only reversed. Not an argument can be drawn from the use of the word everlasting, to prove the limited punishment of the wicked, but will apply with equal force to disprove the endless happiness of the saints in Heaven.

Can we doubt the eternal misery of the damned, when we notice the strong antithesis that marks their future states, as expressed in Matt. xxv. "These shall stand on the right hand, those on the left; he (the Judge) shall say to them on his right hand, come ye blessed, &c. he shall say to them on his left hand, depart ye cursed, &c.—These (the wicked) shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Now, by what rule of interpreting Scripture will our opponents prove that the word eternal (or everlasting) in one case means a limited time, but in the other case the word eternal means duration without end? But some of the Universalians, to evade the difficulty in this passage, have resorted to a most despicable subterfuge;

an artifice too disingenuous for men professing Christianity ! the artifice is this ; the goats on the left hand of the Judge do not represent the wicked themselves, but their sins ; consequently, those who stand on the right hand are not the righteous, but their righteousness is represented by the sheep : therefore, it is not the wicked that our Saviour consigns to hell, but their sins ! (then it is not the righteous that he takes to Heaven, but their righteous deeds !) The Universalians must necessarily suppose that sin is an entity, and that it has an actual being abstract from the sinner, to say nothing of this doctrine as being unphilosophical. The glaring absurdity of such a principle must be obvious to all, when it is recollected, that according to this doctrine our Saviour must have expected the sins of the wicked to feed, clothe him, visit him, &c. and is very much displeased with the sins, while he approves the sinner, consigns the sins to hell, and takes the sinner to Heaven. According to this doc-

trine the transgressor has nothing to fear for himself; and he will feel but little concern for his sins, if he can get well rid of them: he may well inquire of the Universalian, how are our sins raised up, and with what body do they appear? For example, we will suppose a lie is to be judged and damned for not speaking the truth; how will it appear, black or white, square or triangle? In what a despicable light does this doctrine exhibit the Judge of all the earth; while he passes sentence on our sins, and at the same time passes this high encomium on the sinners, "Well done, good and faithful servants," &c. Drunkard, "well done;" atheists, blasphemers, adulterers, and ye that have devoured widows' houses, "well done, good and faithful servants," &c. I don't blame you for not feeding and clothing me, &c. but your sins; and to show you how much I am pleased with your conduct, "enter ye into the joys of your Lord." But to be serious on this momentous and serious subject; what a

~~said dilemma~~ must the Universalist feel  
 himself in, when he is reduced to such  
 shifts and evasions as these. Do we  
 need any other evidence to convince us  
 that that doctrine is false, and that it nev-  
 er proceeded forth from God, than the  
 means which are resorted to by its advo-  
 cates to support it, and the dreadful con-  
 sequences which necessarily flow from it!  
 What a horrible world should we have,  
 were these principles to become univer-  
 sally prevalent. "This earth is the bed-  
 lam of the universe, where reason (undis-  
 eased in Heaven) runs mad."

But religion is the means of restoring  
 reason to its pristine purity, and to rectify  
 the angry passions of the human heart,  
 and to restore man to the lost image of  
 his God. Has Universalism such tend-  
 encies; or rather does it not nourish the  
 worst passions of the human breast? and  
 does it not tend directly to licentiousness?  
 does it not assure impurity to the worst of  
 sinners? Is it not an impenetrable shield  
 to cover infidels and blasphemers from



the just indignation of an offended God ; and give security for the commission of the most enormous crimes ? Will the Universalian presume to say that it does not give licence to every abomination, when they assure the bold blasphemer that the same effects will result to him for blasphemy as if he prays ; and so of every evil ? The Lord in mercy save us from the influence of the leaven of the Universalian principle !

When I travelled once in the state of Vermont, I was informed by a number of persons that were present at the preaching of Mr. Rich, a celebrated preacher of the Universalian profession, when he affirmed that God Almighty had obligated himself to save the most impious sinners when they die. And I ask, can any Universalian deny that this blasphemy is a just inference, or rather is a fair statement of their doctrine. But to return to the subject.

Our Saviour says, " he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he

that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," &c. The Scriptures are full of examples of opposing contrarieties. In the above passage eternal life is opposed to eternal death; and as faith is the means by which we are assured of life, unbelief is the cause that leads us to eternal death. "He that believeth not on the Son shall not see life." There is **no** limitation expressed here; they shall **NEVER** see life, i. e. spiritual and eternal life. There is no intimation in the text that they shall be damned for a while, and then they shall believe and see life: and unfortunately for the Universalian system, there is no other passage that expresses such a principle. But if the Universalian thinks he can prove his doctrine of a limited punishment, he will have the important honour of proving that the Son of God spake an untruth when he said, "he that believeth not shall not see life," much less shall he enter into and enjoy it. A subject of so

such interest, as that the punishment of  
 the wicked shall be only for a limited  
 time, ought to be supported by plain  
 and positive evidence. Let them show  
 us where it is written in God's word,  
 that the punishment of the damned shall  
 come to an end, or that it shall not en-  
 dure always. I say, let them show us  
 the text. We have too much interest in  
 this subject to risk our faith on any man's  
 mere *dixit*. Our Saviour's preaching to  
 the spirits in prison is no proof. Does it  
 say they were brought to believe in  
 Christ? how do we know but they were  
 as stubborn and as unbelieving there as  
 they were when on earth? and does it  
 say positively that Christ went and  
 reached to the prisoners in hell? no  
 such thing is said. This kind of proof is  
 so foreign, and altogether illicit. We  
 cannot rest our faith on such proof as  
 this. And especially when we have the  
 most solemn declarations of Jehovah him-  
 self in confirmation of the opposite doc-  
 trine, we are constrained to yield our cre-  
 dit and firm belief to such testimony.

We ask again, let the Universalians produce a single testimony from the Scriptures, that says, "All men shall be saved absolutely and unconditionally." But there are many, very many passages which say, that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting misery. The psalmist, xlii. 5. says, "God shall likewise DESTROY the wicked for ever." The original word for destroy is very emphatic; it signifies to break to pieces, break down, destroy utterly, as a house is destroyed when it is broken down, and all the materials scattered abroad. And this destruction is to be for ever—the ruined soul is never to be repaired, or restored to its original state. When the wicked are thus destroyed, it is very improbable that there will ever be a restoration of the damned. Read Mal. iv. 1. "Behold, the day shall come which shall burn as an oven; yea, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, &c. The day it shall burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

This figure is taken from a tree which has been rooted up out of the earth, and withers and dies, and is never after fit for any use but to be burned: it can never be resuscitated to life, or made to bear fruit. So shall the proud and wicked sinner be rooted out of the vineyard of the Lord, and die, and eternally perish in a state of separation from God. He must remain for ever bereft of spiritual life, and be destitute of those fruits which characterize the trees of righteousness, or plants of God's right hand planting. By what argument the Universalians will prove that these proud sinners, which are destroyed root and branch, will ultimately be saved, I cannot perceive. There is no intimation in the Scriptures that those characters will be finally redeemed from destruction. If such a thing were possible, why is such a strong figure used to illustrate a mere temporary and partial destruction? for we know, that when a tree is once rooted up out of the ground, and both root and branch are destroyed, it

is impossible for it ever to revive and bear fruit again.

Our Saviour warps us not to fear men who can only kill the body ; “but (says he) fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell fire.” Matt. viii. 28. The Greek word here is GEHENNA, and means something more than the grave, or a guilty conscience ; or otherwise why should we fear God more than we should death ? Moreover, those who kill our bodies, do us the greatest service, if Universalism be true, and we admit but a temporary punishment after death ; for the sooner we die, the less sins we shall commit, and consequently our term of punishment would be shorter in a future state ; and, on the whole, we shall get the sooner to Heaven. But we finally conclude, that we need not fear either God or man ; for, according to the above principle, we can have no motive to fear God ; no, not the worst of sinners, as adulterers, thieves, liars, murderers, &c. since they know that their sins, however numerous or enor-

mous, will not exclude them from God's favour, nor from future happiness.

Again, our Saviour says, "the kingdom of God is likened to a certain king; that would take an account of his servants, &c. and one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents," &c. Having nothing to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and payment to be made. The servant said, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all the debt, &c. His Lord loosed him, and forgave him all the debt. But this same servant refused to forgive his fellow-servant; the debt was retracted; he was cast into utter darkness, until he should pay the utmost farthing. "So," (says our Saviour, speaking to his disciples) "shall my heavenly Father do unto every one of you that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses from his heart." If the Universalian will find out any way for a man to discharge the debt which he has contracted to divine justice, especially when he is shut up in hell, then, and not

till then, can he prove a universal salvation.

The sufferings of the damned do satisfy the claims of divine justice, or they do not. If the former, (i. e.) if the sinner's sufferings do satisfy the claims of justice, then he is not indebted in the least to the merits of Christ, or grace of God; for it can be no grace to discharge a debtor when he has paid his debts. But if the sufferings of a sinner in hell do not expiate his sins, he must, after all, be redeemed from hell by the blood of Christ. What purpose is then answered by all his sufferings? Why must he suffer in the least? If, eventually, he must be indebted to grace for his salvation, no object is gained by his suffering in hell. And would it not be a species of injustice to require the wicked to suffer, though temporarily, when, at the same time, their sufferings make no satisfaction to the claims of justice against them? How, then, is he to pay the utmost farthing? Forasmuch, then, as the sinner cannot discharge his



own debt, let the Universalian prove, by the single explicit declaration from Scripture, that the merits of the Saviour's death will be extended to the damned in hell, or let him acknowledge that there is no way for the insolvent debtor ever to come out of prison. Our Lord says of Judas, "It would have been better if that man had never been born." This cannot be true, if Judas must be saved at last; for the eternal felicity of the saints will more than compensate for the sufferings of any finite period; and of consequence his being, on the whole, must have been a blessing.

Heb. x. 25, 26. "For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Is it possible for words to be more explicit, or more pointed to the subject of a future and ever-enduring punishment, than the above? I cannot con-

ceive by what subtlety in argument the Universalian can evade the force of evidence contained in these words against his doctrine. If the words of Scripture are all spoken with reference to some specific object, is it possible, consistently with such a concession, to reconcile them with the doctrine of universal salvation? The text speaks of a sin which can never be expiated : no sacrifice can atone for it. The merits of Jesus Christ can never be extended to those sins which are committed wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth.

If all men must ultimately be saved, the sacrifice of Christ must extend to every species of sins, (or the sinner must find out some other way of being saved than by Christ) and consequently, the above passage must contain an untruth. Notice—"For such as sin wilfully after, &c. there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," (for such sins.) Secondly, God has revealed no other way of salvation, but by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Thirdly,

We have no assurance that God will pardon one sin but on the merits of Christ. It follows, fourthly, If there be any sin which the sacrifice of Christ has never atoned for, there can be no forgiveness for such a sin, either in this world or in the world to come. For however distant the final redemption of the damned may be, if the event is certain, then the benefits of that sacrifice made by Christ must be extended to such cases; consequently there remaineth a sacrifice for not only those sins which are committed after we receive the knowledge of the truth, but for all other sins and blasphemies, not even excepting the sin against the Holy Ghost. If then the atonement of Christ is to be extended to the sins of the damned, especially to damned apostates, and to such as have or may commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, in direct opposition to the testimony of Christ and his apostles, it remains obligatory on the Universalians to prove the proposition by plain and direct testimo-

ny from Scripture, or by consecutive and fair deductions from the general tenor of Holy Writ. And when they have proved the point, will they please to inform us what could have been the design of the Holy Ghost in excepting certain sins from being pardonable, with those terrible denunciations against certain classes of sinners: and finally, let them reconcile that solemn asseveration of our Saviour with their principle—"They shall never be forgiven, either in this world or in that which is to come."

Another passage, similar to that above quoted, is in Heb. vi. 5, 6. "After they have been enlightened, &c. they fall away; to renew them again to repentance is impossible," says the apostle. They have become incurable; their case is desperate. If they cannot be renewed again to repentance, they cannot be forgiven; they must be damned without remedy, unless they can be saved as impenitent sinners, which is too absurd to be admitted by any candid person.


To save impenitent sinners, as such, would be to take them to heaven while they are in open hostility to the laws of God, and possessed of a nature utterly aversed to all that is good and heaven-like. We must not conceive that we can be happy in heaven without a moral fitness in our natures. The happiness of the glorified does not so much depend on any local circumstances, as on the dispositions they are possessed of. There must be in us an aptitude or a nature suited to the place, society, and employment of heaven, or it is in vain for us to look for happiness in a place not congenial to our nature, or in a society whose natures, principles, and pursuits are different from our own; and especially to be employed in a work that we have never accustomed ourselves to, and have no relish for: it is hardly to be expected, that the punitive pains of hell will produce that change in us, after we have withstood all the calls of God, resisted all his strivings, and been deaf to all his in-

vitations, commands, promises, and threatenings, and they have failed of producing their designed effect.

We will suppose that a blaspheming atheist, such as Hobbes, Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Paine, &c. were taken to heaven, with the same dispositions that they were possessed of while living, could they be happy in the presence of that Saviour whom they blasphemed, denied, ridiculed, &c. ? would their dispositions and habits be suited to the state and employment of the blessed ? I think not.

Agreeably to the Platonic doctrines, (which have been adopted by many of the most eminent Philologists) "Whatever moral habits the soul acquires or contracts, while it remains in the body, the same habits and dispositions will remain attached to the soul when it becomes separated from the body." If the Spirit of God's grace possesses not efficacy enough to change the sinner's heart, and subdue his vicious habits, I cannot believe that the pains of hell will ever produce that

radical change in our disposition which is requisite to enjoy God, and cause us to delight in his ways. What can a sinner merit by his sufferings in hell? Are not his sufferings the effects of his sins, as well as a punishment? What virtue is there in enduring pain, when that pain is caused by our own infliction? Do we ever see that the effects resulting from any vice operate as a corrective to that vice in this world? If not, how can we believe that the sufferings of the damned will correct their evil habits, or cure them of their vices? Or are their sufferings meant as a commutation to divine justice? If justice receives its claims, in whole or in part, by such sufferings, then they pay their own debts: their salvation is not of grace. It can be no grace to let us out of prison when we have discharged our own debt. They never can join in the song of the blessed—Glory to the Lamb, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. But if, after all his sufferings, his sins are to be forgiven,



where is the utility of his suffering in hell at all? But sinners saved in this way must be saved as passively as machines. How will the Judge say to such, "Well done, good and faithful servants?" What have they done that is praiseworthy? Faithful servants! in what have they been faithful? In suffering the pains of hell? These must have been involuntary; the character of faithful does not, in any sense, belong to such. Do they serve God by their sufferings in hell? Is God served by the blasphemies, groans, and gnawing the tongue with pain? The damned in hell render no service to God. The Saviour, then, can never give them the appellation of good and faithful servants.

A man for his crimes suffers ten years in prison, and then being liberated, merits no reward: he is at least no better than he was before his crime was committed. The case must be the same with the damned; he suffers judicially, justice demands it, and when he suffers no more



than justice claims of him, it is impossible that he should afterwards be rewarded with eternal glory ; for his sufferings are either to satisfy the claims that justice makes against him, or to merit a reward ; if for the former, then no reward can be due to him ; but if the latter is the object of his sufferings, then his salvation is a debt, which he claims as due to his sufferings. But if he justly deserves to be damned, it matters not how long he remains in hell, provided his sins have deserved it ; when he comes out he is the same unholy being as before he suffered, for we cannot conceive how the damned can acquire those moral virtues which are necessary to fit him for Heaven ; he certainly cannot acquire them from practice. How is the covetous sinner to acquire the virtue of benevolence ? How are the lascivious to become virtuous ? Every person must see that the damned have no opportunity (even if they had a disposition) to acquire any of the positive or active virtues : if they possess any, they

must be merely of a passive nature ; and will any one say that they ought to be rewarded for what God works in them by an irresistible influence of his Holy Spirit. To make this subject plain, suppose that the covetous sinner is made to feel charitable ; he gives no charity, he never exercises that virtue ; and if the pains of hell produce that disposition or change, it is no virtue in him, for he would not suffer if he could help it : he is as passive as a piece of iron that is ignited with heat.

But if God works those morally good qualities in the soul of the sinner while in hell, without his concurrence, or practising any moral good himself, then his sufferings answer no purpose ; for after all his sufferings God must operate on him as he would operate on a stone, and infuse into him those morally good qualities which are necessary to fit him for heaven ; and all this the Lord might have done as well before as after his sufferings in hell. Yet he is to be rewarded,

but for what; what has he done? Will the Universalian say that the sufferings of the damned are meritorious, or are their sufferings moral virtues? yet they must be rewarded; but is it for feeding the hungry &c.? No. Is it for confessing Christ before men? No: for they denied him before men, and blasphemed his name. But are they to be saved because they repented of their sins, denied themselves and obeyed the commandments of God? Nay; they gloried in their sins during their day of visitation, and denied the Lord that bought them. Finally, it comes to this; that those who are saved out of hell are saved without possessing any of the morally good qualities; for prisoners shut up in hell can have no opportunity or means of acquiring those moral habits and virtues; for moral virtues cannot exist but in free moral agents, and no one I think will say that the damned are free moral agents; the moral turpitude of their natures becomes permanently fixed and confirmed, without

a possibility of a change. In that state I doubt whether it will be possible for the sinner to choose moral good; their moral turpitude will be so rooted and inveterate, that there will be a kind of moral necessity for their continuing in the same state eternally.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which was related by our Saviour, is in point, and proves beyond all controversy the doctrine of a future and eternal punishment. The rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom; he offers a petition to Abraham; but does he petition to be delivered from his punishment? Not at all; he barely requests a drop of water to cool his tongue, yet even this small favour was denied him: could he after this denial expect any greater favour? The subterfuge which the Universalians resort to, to evade the force of evidence contained in this history against them is not worthy a refutation.

Rev. xiv. 11. "And they that worship the beast shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Again, "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever," (i. e.) throughout all the ages of eternity. The Greek words here answers exactly to the Hebrew words NOLEM GNOD ;] no words are capable expressing endless duration more fully than these words do. The apostle is evidently speaking of the state of the wicked after the general judgment.

If the Universalian can inform us where it is written that any change will take place in the states of either the righteous or wicked after the general judgment has taken place, I promise to embrace their system. John says, "Death and hell shall give up their dead which are in them." Death holds dominion over the bodies of men until the resurrection ; when death is to be destroyed ; he yields his dominion over the body : hell [HADES] delivers up the souls of the wicked. The error of the Universalists lie in not no-

ting the difference between the words hell and the lake of fire and brimstone: the Greek term [HADES] and the Hebrew word [SHAOL] are of precisely the same import; they signify sometimes the grave, sometimes the receptacle of the dead, both of the righteous and wicked; but more definitely, the place where the spirits of the wicked go after death, where they are reserved like prisoners in custody, until the judgment of the great day, when death yields his dominion over the body, and hell gives up the soul; they are then united, and are formally judged; then all that are not found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. The above definitions and distinctions are not fanciful, but are supported by the most irrefragable evidence: for all those Christians who believe in a general resurrection, must admit that the souls neither of the righteous nor the wicked, are rewarded or punished, until the end of the world. (See Josephus's Epistle to the Greeks, and Lord

g's Annotations on the Apostle's ed.) For were they judged immediately after death, it would supercede the necessity of a general judgment. That there will be a general judgment, is proved by many plain and positive texts of scripture; as also by the concurrent testimony of wise and good men in all ages of the world. "I saw (says Daniel) many that slept in the dust arose, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt." Again, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his angels with him, then shall he gather up him all nations—He shall gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff shall burn with unquenchable fire—then shall all nations be gathered before him, and he shall separate the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats, &c.—He shall set on his left hand, Depart, ye cursed, into eternal (AIONIAN) fire." "I saw (says John) a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from before whose face the heavens (the solar system)

and the earth fled away, &c. and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, &c. and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, &c. and all that were not found written in the book of life, were cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where is the beast and false prophet." When will they get out? Let the Universalian answer. These are events which will take place at the end of the world; in the general judgment, when death and hell are destroyed, and the eternal destiny of men is irreversibly fixed. The beast and false prophet are in the lake of fire, which is called the second death. By the first death the soul and body are separated; in the second death, soul and body are eternally separated from God, and consigned to the lake of fire and brimstone; which place is essentially different from hell; the spirit alone goes to hell; soul and body will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and that too after the general judgment.



Now let the Universalians prove that there is any redemption from this lake of fire after the judgment-day. Will they say, that no one goes to this place after that day? If so, they must deny the Scriptures, which are explicit on this subject. Neither are the righteous formally rewarded, nor the wicked formally punished, until the resurrection and general judgment; for it would be absurd to suppose, that the Lord would reward the one or punish the other, before they are formally judged. But at the end of the world, Christ will deliver up the mediatorial kingdom, and assume the character of Judge of the world. Then shall he come in his Father's glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall render to every man according to his works. There will be no medium of reconciliation with God when Christ shall have resigned his mediatorial office; there will be no priest to make intercession for sinners; none to make atonement for sin.

We have no assurance that a day of

grace will ever be afforded them after the judgment-day. Neither has God anywhere told us that any means, opportunity, or possibility of effecting a change in our moral character, will take place after this life.

If, therefore, the sinner is saved after the general judgment, it must be effected (for any thing we know to the contrary) without a Saviour, without an atoning priest, or mediator, and without the possibility of his practising any active virtue, either moral or civil; he is as passive as a stone; and as much glory would redound to God, (for any thing we can perceive) to save a cart, or any machine, as to save a sinner.

But where is it explicitly written, that the damned will ever be redeemed out of hell, either before or after the judgment? This doctrine involves consequences too serious and important to us, to be rested on abstract deductions and nice disquisitions, spun out of our prejudices or prepossessions. Let us have something plain and pointed, such as "Thus saith the

Lord," "Thus saith an inspired prophet, apostle," &c. then we shall feel ourselves safe in yielding our credence to the doctrine. But until such evidence is afforded, we think it much safer, (if not so congenial with our carnal natures and wicked habits) to believe the numerous testimonies contained in the Scriptures, in support of the doctrine of future and endless punishment of incorrigible sinners. It is certainly very mysterious to me, to behold rational beings yield their assent to principles which are merely hypothetical, and at the same time reject, with the utmost assurance, doctrines bottomed on the immutable principles of truth, and supported by evidence as clear as meridian light.

We lay down the following as fundamental principles in theology: First, God is the moral Governor of the universe. Secondly, Man is his subject; and as a subject of moral law, he is a free agent, and responsible to the laws of God for his actions. Universalism, as I conceive, is irreconcilable with either of the above

principles; which I have endeavoured to prove in the preceding pages. We are every where taught in the Holy Scriptures, that man is a probationer in this world only: all the commands of God regard him as such: they are only suited to his present state: the future state is that of reward or punishment. If God can and will extend mercy to the wicked after death, it is known to himself alone: he has never revealed the thing to us. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." Is hell the place for a sinner to repent? and is it probable that they will possess the disposition necessary to repent? We know that godly sorrow is produced in the sinner's heart by the Holy Spirit. Where is the promise that the aid of the Holy Spirit will be afforded to the sinner in hell? and how will they approach God without a mediator, without a throne of grace? Let us answer these questions, before we venture too far on this dangerous ground. The Lord says, "*The wicked shall be turned into*

hell;" but does he any where say, they shall be brought out again, after they have suffered ten thousand, or one thousand years? Our Saviour, speaking of a certain character, says, "The last state of that man is worse than the first:" in his first state he was possessed of an unclean spirit; his last state is still worse: there can be no state beyond the last; but if he is finally saved, most certainly his last state is much better than his first.

I think there is not a single passage in the Bible, which, by a fair and candid construction, in connexion with the context, will go to prove the doctrine that is opposed in these sheets. We are to beware of the craft and sophistry of men. A man of talents, with a tolerable education, may raise difficulties, and partially hide the truth from our eyes, and say many plausible things in support of error: almost any subject in the hands of an ingenious man, may be made to assume the form and aspect of truth; and by such means many unwary persons, who are

not willing to think and examine for themselves, are deceived to their eternal ruin.

We are aware, that the doctrine of a Universal Salvation is very pleasing to our carnal, corrupt nature, and hence the danger of our imbibing the principle is much the greater. If wicked men can be made to believe that there is no future punishment, and that their salvation is infallibly certain, they will have no motive sufficiently powerful to induce them to oppose the corrupt propensities of their nature, or forsake those habits and vices which both inclination and interest urge them to. What an effectual door does it open to every species of crime ! It removes every restraint which the law of God has imposed on us ; or rather, it nullifies every command of God ; or, which is tantamount, it destroys their sanctity, their penalties ; and what are laws without penalties ? mere rules of life. We may descant on the love and benevolence of God ; but what effects can we expect will be produced on men, who are devoid of benevolence, and of every virtuous sentiment ;

and who see no beauty nor loveliness in moral virtue ; but whose nature and habits are utterly opposed to every moral excellence ?

Young people, beware of the dreadful precipice before you. When subtle men are exhibiting to your eyes a landscape of the heavenly Canaan, and portraying the rivers, springs, groves, and all the beauties of the upper world ; beware, I say, that you do not tumble into the terrible abyss of wo and misery beneath your feet. It is by means of such representations that many souls are decoyed into error. These blandishments dazzle the eyes, bewilder the sense, and, in the interim, the subtle serpent of error winds his way into our minds, and takes firm possession, before we are aware of his approaches. Let me counsel you to look before you leap : examine candidly before you believe : do not let your feeling and fancy carry away your reason or judgment. And before you give your consent to the Universalian doctrine, answer the following inquiries. Is God the moral

Governor of the universe? Has he given laws to his rational creatures? Is man a free moral agent? If he is, can God save him as a free moral agent, if he necessitates him to act, either good or bad? If man is not a free moral agent, can he be a subject of moral law, or accountable for his actions? Can we reconcile man's free moral agency with absolute and unconditional salvation? Can unconditional salvation be reconciled with the moral character of the Deity? Is it not absurd and contradictory to say, that moral government is compatible with necessity? And must we not admit that man is governed by necessity, when he can choose no alternative; or if his destiny is fixed? To say, that all men shall be saved, is it not tantamount to say, they are governed by necessary laws, and not by moral laws?

If Universal Salvation be incompatible with penal laws, could not the Deity as well secure our ~~present~~ obedience without laws, as our ~~future~~ happiness contrary to his laws? Are any of the threatenings



of God compatible with the doctrine of universal salvation? Has God any where in Scripture promised salvation but to righteous characters? And has he any where in his word promised absolutely to make any man righteous? And if it be his will to save men in their sins, could he not as well have saved them from committing sin at all? And finally, do not the doctrines which are here contested represent sin as a very harmless thing? for we see many of the most profligate wretches, who, though rolling in luxury and sensual pleasure all their lives—are guilty of almost every crime, such as oppression, deception, lying, swearing, adultery, drunkenness, &c. have not sorrow, like other men, neither have they any bands in their death: yet these same characters go directly to heaven, and take their seats beside the meek, humble, patient, cross-bearing, suffering servants of God! the Lord Jesus shall pass the same encomiums on the former as on the latter individuals, viz. “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Can you possibly per-

suade yourselves to believe a doctrine fraught with such absurd and impious consequences ?

God requires us to use our reason, and the means of information with which he has furnished us. We ought to study, examine, and collate the various parts of Scripture ; pray God to lead our minds into all truth ; and he will assuredly afford us his light, and the guidance of his Spirit.

May the good Lord enable us to make the necessary preparation for that world of glory which he has promised to them, and them only, who love him, and desire his appearing.

# **EVIDENCES**

**IN FAVOUR OF THE DIVINITY OF THE**

***HOLY SCRIPTURES.***



## EVIDENCES, &c.

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THOUGH there never was an era when the believers in Divine Revelation were more simultaneous in their efforts to diffuse the light of truth through the world, than the present ; and we contemplate with pleasure the rapid spread of the gospel, and its ameliorating and moralizing effects on the state of society generally, it is with exquisite pain and anxious solicitude, that we behold the prevalence of open infidelity, and a predisposition in many to indulge in secret scepticism, and all the gratifications of sense. Even among the professors of the purest system of religion and morals that was ever communicated by God to his creatures, we perceive a general lukewarmness in their devotions, and too much conformity to the policy, customs and fashions of the world.

Error, that bane of religion, under the

specious garb of truth, was never more assiduous than at the present day, to appear as the offspring of science, and the handmaid of religion. This is truly an age of wonders. Extremes seem to meet; and what would once have been received as solecisms, are now regarded as common occurrences. Forasmuch as we see a disposition in some, who make pretensions to learning and religion, to cavil at certain marvellous events which are related in the holy Scriptures, and by their captious questions confound the ignorant but sincere Christian, and often cause him to doubt the divine origin of those Scriptures which are the foundation of all his hopes; I thought it might be profitable to many inquirers after truth, to set before them some of the arguments by which the divinity of the Scriptures is supported; and that in so plain and easy a style as will suit the most ordinary capacity.

We proceed then to the inquiry, "What are the evidences we have in support of a divine revelation? and to prove that our *Scriptures* contain such a revelation."

Before we proceed on the proof of this subject, it may be necessary to premise,

*First.* It is admitted on all hands, that it was possible for Deity to make a supernatural revelation of his will to his creatures. *Secondly,* It was perfectly compatible with the Divine perfections to make such a revelation. *Thirdly,* The state of mankind was such, especially after the fall, as to require a revelation of the will of God. *Fourthly,* There appears to have been a very general expectation among mankind that God would make such a revelation of his holy will to his poor, erring creatures. *Fifthly,* The fictitious oracles among the heathen are a tacit proof, that mankind universally expected that God would make revelations of his will to mortals. *Sixthly,* It is reasonable to conclude, that when the Almighty designed to make a revelation of his will to the children of men, he would afford them satisfactory evidence that the agents whom he commissioned to make known his truth, should be invested with divine authority. Hence, if we prove

that those men who have communicated the will of God to us, were divinely inspired, we prove that the truths which they delivered were of divine origin, and of consequence, were a revelation from God.

The fact then to be proved is, Were the writers of the Scriptures divinely inspired? I believe they were. The evidences in support of this fact are of two kinds, viz. external and internal. The external are, 1st. The miracles of Moses, of the Prophets, of Jesus Christ, and of his Apostles. These were very generally wrought in the most public manner; the facts were tested both by friends and enemies, with their eyes, ears, hands, &c. 2dly. They were generally acknowledged, at the time they were wrought, to have been effected by some supernatural agency: none who saw them ever denied the facts. 3dly. Contemporary writers have, in many instances, recorded the facts, though sometimes they have corrupted them with fables. 4thly. No *contemporary* writer has ever controverted



or denied the miracles said to have been wrought by the inspired writers; which circumstance could scarcely have been possible, considering the nature of some of those miracles.

5thly. Many of the miracles were of such a character, and were wrought under such circumstances, that there was no possibility of illusion or imposture. 6thly. The miracles of the Scriptures were only wrought when it was absolutely necessary to prove the divinity of their mission. Or, 7thly. They were wrought for beneficial purposes; and on no occasion did these inspired men work miracles merely to make an ostentatious display of their extraordinary powers, or to gratify any selfish purposes. We shall find, on examination, that the fictitious miracles of Mahomet, the Heathens, and the Papists, have not a single characteristic of the Scripture miracles. 8thly. Monuments, festivals, and a great variety of observances, were instituted at the time the miracles were said to have been wrought, as

commemorative of those events; and of all these monuments, festivals, &c. not one was ever doubted, for a long succession of ages, to have had its origin in some miraculous event recorded by the sacred historians. If we doubt the facts recorded by the writers of the holy Scriptures, we must discredit also the testimony of all ancient historians.

To instance the origin of the Passover, which was instituted to commemorate one of the most singular and awful events that is recorded in history. "This night, (says Jehovah) I will pass over Egypt, and I will slay the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast.—Thou shalt command the children of Israel to take a lamb, one to each family, and slay it, and they shall take the blood thereof, and sprinkle it on the posts of the door.—The same night the Lord passed over Egypt, and at midnight he slew all the firstborn of Egypt, from the firstborn of the king on his throne down to the firstborn of him on the dung-hill. But he passed over the houses of *the children of Israel.*" Hence Moses

commanded them to keep the feast of the passover for ever, in remembrance of this awful event. If this event had never occurred, every one of those people, to whom he spoke, could have contradicted the account which he gave of the event; and is it possible that he could have imposed an ordinance on that whole people, and caused them to believe that the ordinance was given them to commemorate an event which they must have known was fabulous?

The miraculous passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea, was celebrated by Moses and all the children of Israel in a song, which is said to have been composed on that occasion. Now, had that song been composed before or after it was said that event took place, every individual of that congregation could have contradicted the account given by Moses; and so of all the other miracles of Moses.

9thly. Prophecies were delivered by various persons respecting events the most remote and singular of any that have ever

occurred, either in the natural, political, or moral world. No human sagacity could have foreseen them, on account of their singular character. No politician or philosopher could have had any data, from which they could have drawn their conclusions. No general concatenation of causes and events could have guided them in their predictions; for many of their prophecies respected events contrary to their natural order, and cannot be accounted for on any other principle than the interposition, or miraculous interference of Jehovah; and no human being could, I presume, foretell what the Deity would do thousands of years after. Many of those predictions which were uttered three thousand years ago, (and we have authentic proof that the Jewish Scriptures have existed for that length of time) we have seen fulfilled with all the circumstantial particularity of historical narration. For instance; the prophecies of Isaiah respecting the destruction of Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre, *when those cities were in the zenith of*

their glory: the predictions of Moses, and other prophets, respecting the dispersion of the children of Israel, and what should happen to them at the time of their dispersion, and their being preserved distinct from all other people; notwithstanding the means which have been used by various legislators to incorporate them with their own people; is no mean proof of the divinity of those predictions.

10thly. The most of the opposers of divine revelation have, at the hour of death, testified their convictions of the truth of the sacred Scriptures, though they had opposed them all their lives; and some of these sceptics have acknowledged, at that solemn hour, that they could not die in peace, without doing them that justice: whereas, on the other side, we have never known a believer in divine revelation renounce his faith in the hour of death, nor regret that he had been a believer.

The internal evidences in support of the Scriptures being a revelation from God are 1. The consistent account which

the divine historian has given of the creation of the world; 2. The fall of man; 3. The depravity of human nature; and, 4. The universal deluge. The accounts we have in the holy Scriptures of these events are, in some respects, corroborated by our own experience, and by many marks and vestiges remaining at the present day; for which we can assign no other causes than those assigned by Moses and the prophets. whereas no other consistent or satisfactory account has been given of the origin of those things than that contained in the holy Scriptures; But, on the contrary, the most absurd and contradictory accounts have been given by theorist philosophers and moralists, who have interspersed the most ridiculous fables, which neither agree with common sense nor with existing facts.

2. The transcendent beauty of the diction of the Scriptures, and the inimitable descriptions which are given of the perfections and moral beauty of the great *First Cause*, particularly his wisdom,

power, goodness, and justice, are worthy the supreme Lord of the universe. How low, grovelling, and disgusting are the gods of the heathens, when compared with the omnipotent, wise, and beneficent God of the Scriptures! 3. The connexion and harmony which exist in the writings of the inspired penmen, though they lived in different and distant ages, were of different nations, countries, habits, talents, and education, they all agree in the same principles, they inculcate the same moral duties, they all agree in their descriptions of the Divine Being; they maintain man's free moral agency, and his consequent responsibility to God for all their works; the depravity and sinfulness of human nature, and the means of recovery by our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Although it be conceded, that many of the inspired writers were illiterate and unlearned, yet while they were under the divine afflatus, they poured forth extemporaneously torrents of overwhelming eloquence, and constrained their astonished auditors to exclaim, From whence have

these men obtained these things? whence these sublime descriptions, these figures, symbols, parables, &c.? how is it we hear them speak languages they never learnt?

5. The reproaches, sufferings, not even excepting death, which most of these holy men voluntarily submitted to in support of those doctrines which they delivered, and thereby evincing their own conviction of their truth, proved that they were divinely commissioned. 6. The promise which Jesus Christ made to his apostles, that after his ascension to glory, he would send them the Comforter, the Spirit of truth; its various operations on their hearts, and the diversity of effects which it was said should be produced on the hearts of men, have been abundantly verified, as thousands and millions, of all nations, have and can testify. 7. The divine power which has in all ages attended the preaching of the word, and the blessed effects which have been produced by it, in civilizing, moralizing, and ameliorating the state of human society, when it *is evident* that no similar effects have re-



sulted from the promulgation of any other religion or principle in any age of the world. 8. The holy and happy lives, and triumphant deaths of those who have been genuine believers in divine revelation, in all ages of the world. Although fanaticism and delusion may have their votaries, and they may be inspired with a temporary ecstasy, it is the real believer alone that can wait with calm resignation for the hour of his dissolution; he alone can feel an assured triumph; no doubts nor fears disturb the tranquility of his mind; he alone can smile at the prospect of death; he knows in whom he has believed; his hope is founded on the promises of the gospel; it answers his soul as a buoy in the swelling of Jordan; he launches away not with fearful apprehension, or awful forebodings of annihilation, but with certain steps he treads the vale of death; the face of his Redeemer enlightens his path; the rod and staff of his God support and comfort him: thus, blessed with the smiles and supports of his Saviour,

he goes forth a fearless expectant of eternal happiness, a candidate for immortal honours, and an heir of an incorruptible inheritance in the kingdom of God.

To conclude. It may be profitable here to subjoin a short dissertation on the subject of *Free Moral Agency*, which I wrote some years ago. The question discussed is, "What constitutes a free moral agent?" The question may be divided into two, 1. What constitutes a free moral agent? 2. What constitutes a moral agent?

A free agent must possess the faculty to will freely any thing within the sphere of his knowledge; he must possess an inherent principle of beginning and determining his motions by his choice. Yet, though we concede that the actions of a free agent must be the result of a free volition, nevertheless his power is very circumscribed; he cannot do every thing he may choose; for, though his mind is free to will, his body labours under many restrictions and limitations.

*Moral Agency* consists in the power to perceive moral truth, and a capability to

perform moral actions. A moral agent must necessarily be a free agent, in order to discharge the obligations of moral law ; otherwise he could not be a subject of moral government. Hence moral actions are those which are performed willingly by a free moral agent. Moral virtue consists in the act that is freely performed by a free moral agent in obedience to God's moral law. No action that is done from necessity can bear the character of moral good or moral evil. Hence if man is a subject of moral government, and under moral obligations to obey his Maker, he must be endowed with a capacity to comply or not to comply with those obligations. It is on this principle, that we suppose it right, on the part of our Creator to claim or enforce such obligations on his creatures.

When Adam sinned, and of consequence lost his disposition and ability to do morally good actions, his condition was that of a criminal condemned to die : he was not then in a condition to discharge the claims of the moral law, as he

had forfeited all claims to its protection ; justice demanded his life. But the Redeemer, having satisfied this penalty of the law, so far as to exonerate man from suffering it, and a gracious reprieve being granted him, he is, in virtue of Christ's merits, constituted again a free moral agent ; a probationary state is again afforded him, life and death are set before him, and he commences a candidate for a glorious reward. Ample means are provided for his restoration to the image of God, which he lost by his apostacy, and he is again restored to the relation of a subject of God's moral government, though under a more lenient covenant, a covenant established on better promises ; whereby he is, through the mighty power and energy of the Holy Spirit, made capable of complying with all the requisitions of the new covenant, which covenant is designated the covenant of grace, in contradistinction to the covenant of works, to signify that his restoration is the effects of mighty grace,

and not by an exertion of any principle inherent in man.

Yet it would be absurd and impious to conclude, that Jehovah would subject his creatures to the obligation of doing any thing which he had not given them a capacity to perform. Where is the inconsistency of supposing that God did afford to man after his fall the power of complying with the requisitions of the moral law ; and was it possible to constitute him a responsible being, unless he was first constituted a free moral agent.

The ability with which Adam was endowed in his original state, was as perfectly gratuitous as the restoration of that power after the fall. He has the ability in both states, with this difference ; his original powers were inherent, his ability after his fall is communicated by the agency of the Holy Spirit ; and it is through the merits of Christ that the Spirit is given him, and by its influence he is constituted a free, moral, and responsible agent. We may feel perfectly

assured that a competent ability is bestowed on us to comply with all the requisitions of the new covenant ; and on this principle the responsibility of man is founded, and on no other. First, it is admitted that the Creator has a right to demand our services. Secondly, all his claims must be founded in justice. Thirdly, but it can never be according to the principles of justice to demand of any one more than they have ability to perform, it follows, Fourthly, man must have been endowed with power to comply with the terms of the new covenant, or its requisitions must be unjust.

But it must be granted that all the commands of our Creator are founded on righteous principles ; but no command is just or righteous, that cannot be complied with on the part of the subject ; for no creature can be responsible for more than has been committed to him. Where power is wanting to refrain from an act, there can be no culpability ; and where necessity governs an act, there can be no *moral* virtue ; for moral virtue consists

in the spontaneous and willing compliance of the soul with some moral duty : and moral evil consists in a voluntary departure from some known moral duty. If we will attend to the exercises of our own minds rather than to popular theories, we shall find that we possess an inherent energy or principle, by which we can originate thought and will in ourselves ; as we by a physical power begin motion. This property belongs to all free agents ; it is their peculiar characteristic to direct their thoughts to any object, and to determine their wills, on any motives they please. Motives are not the cause of our choice, as the Calvinists affirm, but they are the means of determining our choice ; and by not observing this distinction, many persons are confounded by the sophistry of necessitarians. To illustrate this subject, suppose a man wishes to raise a weight ; he is unable to do it by applying his strength directly, and therefore has recourse to a tackle or handspike, by which means he raises the weight with ease : in the same

way the mind of man employs motives ; we are, for instance, to make choice between two objects : the mind has the faculty of calling in few or many motives it can choose to deliberate, or it can choose to decide precipitately. It has a faculty to enhance or depreciate motives ; it can decide on a single motive, or it may call to its aid many motives. Anger, revenge, covetousness, and a variety of other considerations may be called in to aid the mind in its decisions. Whenever the mind decides on its object, that choice or decision of the mind we call *willing* ; and prior to such choice that *will* had no existence. The power to *will* is an original faculty of the soul, but *willing* is an effect perfectly under the control of the soul. The power to will and to do are from the Lord our Creator ; so is our power to see, to walk, to speak, &c. from the Lord. Although he does not determine the eye to one particular object, he does not control my tongue or feet by an irresistible influence, but he *has left these powers under the control of*



the mind ; and if man may employ these faculties in wicked pursuits, he must not blame his Creator. In like manner, that power by which man is constituted a moral and accountable agent, is from God. Not that God communicates any new powers to the soul supernaturally, but he removes certain disabilities which man has brought on himself ; and in this way restores us to the use of our moral powers. Man has eyes, but he sees not, because sin has darkened his mind : while he remains in this state he cannot see, consequently he has no knowledge of his state ; but when the true light shines into his mind his native darkness is dispersed ; by the aid of this light he can see. His natural disability being removed, this light gives the moral ability to see. It is given for the purpose of lighting him to Heaven ; but there is no necessity laid on him to follow this light, any more than there is a necessity of our receiving the natural light. But if we prefer darkness to light, we may only

shut our eyes against the light, and the soul will again relapse into darkness.— Had not this light (which is the grace of God that bringeth salvation) appeared unto him he could not have been a moral agent, neither could he have been a subject of moral government. For it is on this principle that Christ fixes our accountability ; “ This,” says he, “ is your condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” Their rejecting the light when it came to them is the cause of their condemnation ; of consequence, their rejecting the light was voluntary : they might have received it, and followed its divine teachings, otherwise it could do them no good, and therefore they could not be condemned for not using it. But where much is given much is required ; and on the same principle, where no moral ability is given, no moral duty can be required.

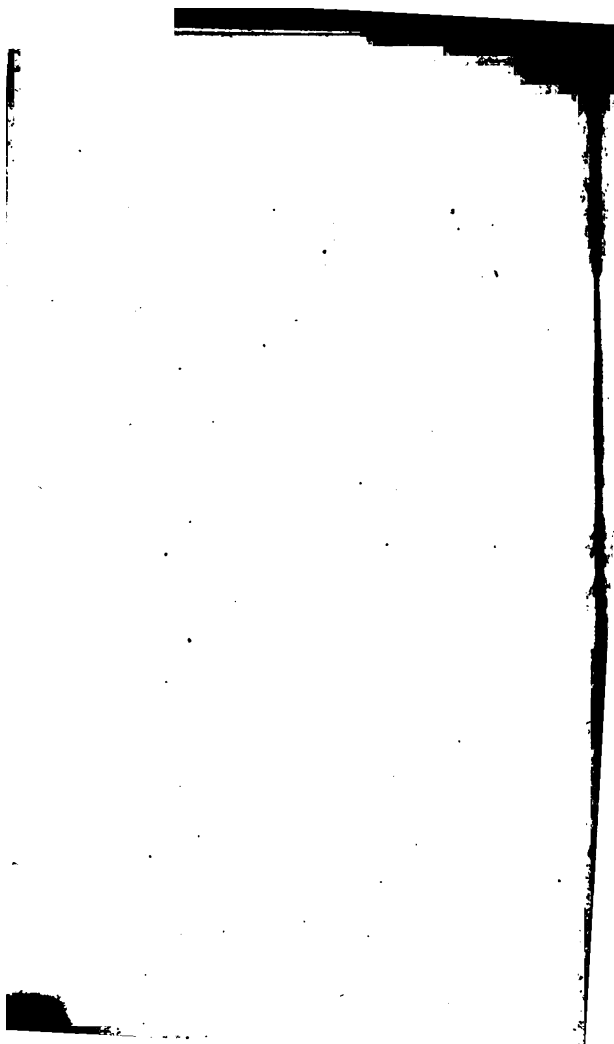
According to the Hopkinsian doctrine, we have a natural ability to do good. *Nothing* can be more absurd ; for if the

power to do works, morally good, be natural, then we have no need of supernatural assistance : but if they mean by a natural ability something different from moral ability, they must suppose that man can perform moral acts with a natural ability ; then of course we do not want a moral ability. But what nonsense it is to say, that a man performs moral actions with a natural ability. Man has the power, but he has no disposition, say they : Jesus Christ says, " Without me ye can do nothing : " again the apostle says, " To will is present with me ; but how to perform I find not. " He had the disposition, it seems, but he had not the power to do what he wished to do, (i. e.) he felt himself a sinner bound with chains ; he groans for liberty, and obtains divine aid. He saw the beauty of religion, and made his choice : he pleads with God ; he feels his insufficiency to deliver himself, but he can groan—the Lord hears the groaning of the prisoner, Christ delivers him from his bonds.

**He did all that any sinner could do ; he confessed his sins, he asked for pardon, and waited for deliverance. In all those acts he proved himself a free moral agent. Happy would it be for us, if we would improve our ability as he did, and ask for mercy.**

**FINIS.**







~~AUG 31 1982~~

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